# THE LIFE OF BERNAL DIAZ DEL CASTILLO

R.B. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM

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BERNAL DIAZ DEL CASTILLO

*Bernal Diaz del Castillo.*

# BERNAL DIAZ DEL CASTILLO

## BEING SOME ACCOUNT OF HIM, TAKEN FROM HIS TRUE HISTORY OF THE CONQUEST OF NEW SPAIN

Robert Graham

BY

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# PREFACE

Few books have had more difficulties to face than had the celebrated *History of the Conquest of New Spain*, that Bernal Diaz wrote in his old age. The period at which he wrote (1568 *circa*) is renowned for the difficulties to be encountered in its caligraphy. The handwriting of Bernal Diaz is exceedingly hard to read, twisted and gnarled, and full of strange abbreviations. Moreover, he spells exactly as he must have spoken, setting down *aguelo* for *abuelo* (grandfather) and *bronsne* for *bronce* (bronze), exactly as a Castilian countryman might do even at the present day.

As he was old and war-worn and had been wounded many times, it is not unlikely that his hands were somewhat crippled, or at the least stiff, and anyhow, more used to hold the lance and bridle, than the pen. Although the work was known and appreciated almost as soon as it was finished, for both Herrera in his *General History of the Indies*,[1] Fray Juan de Torquemeda and the Licentiate Antonio de Leon Pinelo all quote from it, it long remained in manuscript. The original MS. was preserved most carefully, in Guatemala, first by the descendants of the author, and later by the municipality of the place, where it exists to-day. In the sixteenth century

[1] *Historia General de los hechos de los Castellanos en las Islas y Tierra firme del Mar Oceano*, Madrid, 1601.



5939.

a copy was transmitted to Madrid for the King (Philip II.) to be used by his historians.

Up to this time all the quotations and the copy were probably correct, and taken from the original. In 1632 a friar, one Alonso Remon, of the order of the Mercenarians, first printed it. At once it sprang into both popularity and fame, and ran, after some years, to five editions, being considered the most complete of all the histories of the conquest of New Spain.

Already doubts as to the correctness of the editions published by Remon had got abroad in Spain, for, writing in 1629, Don Antonio de Leon Pinelo remarked that Fray Alonso Remon had a "corrected" copy of his own, ready to give out for the press. It is a pity if he had such a copy that he made no use of it, for all through the editions that were published by him, occur omissions and interpolations, on almost every page. This was pointed out by Don Francisco Antonio de Fuentes y Guzman, great-great-grandson of the author, towards the last years of the century (1600).

These alterations and interpolations do not in any way affect the interest of the book as a whole, and it still remains one of the most interesting in the possession of mankind. What they do is to exaggerate numbers, disfigure proper names, and now and then to leave out, and sometimes to interpolate a phrase or two. Fray Remon has omitted several pages of the beginning of the book in which Diaz gives various notes about himself and of his family. As Fray Alonso Remon was a Mercenarian, he naturally wrote to advance the honour of his Order, and several times declares that a friar of his habit, Bartolomé de Olmedo,

was with Diaz in Guatemala, and was the first to preach the faith of Christ. As it is certain this friar was not in Guatemala at the time, this seems a little difficult, unless, as the publisher[1] of the correct edition says, we admit another miracle, such as that of St. Anthony of Padua, who was in two places at the same time.

Thus after four hundred years the manuscript so long preserved in Guatemala has been given to the world, just as it came forth from the brain of the old conqueror.

In this, my little sketch, I am not much concerned with this or that edition; but chiefly with the man. What I discern in him is steadfastness, sincerity, and in the main an absence of the gross superstitions that in his time blinded so many of his contemporaries, though he was ardent in his faith. His style is nervous, and though occasionally involved, remains after so many hundred years a well of pure Castilian, into which when you let down a bucket, it comes up, filled with good water, still sparkling, after the lapse of time.

Diaz had, as it were, a foot both in the camps of literature and arms. One was his natural place, the other he made for himself and filled it worthily.

To be a conqueror and an historian at the same time falls to the lot of few. Most conquerors (with some notable exceptions) have not been men of words.

[1] Genaro Garcia, Mexico, 1904, published the correct text for the first time from the MS. preserved in Guatemala in Diaz's own handwriting. Mr. Maudslay has translated the whole voluminous text, extending to more than a thousand pages, for the Hakluyt Society. There are two other English translations, besides several into French and German, one by Maurice Keating, 1800; the other by John Ingram Lockart, 1844. The latter places Bernal Diaz beside Cervantes, and says his book is as interesting as *Don Quixote.*

Bernal Diaz del Castillo wielded both sword and pen, and after a long life of action he sat down to write in his old age. Although he loved and reverenced Cortés, his judgment was not blinded by his love, for no man saw another's faults more clearly; but as Don Quixote's madness did not abate an atom of the respect in which his squire held him, so it was with the soldier-chronicler and his general.

When fighting long was done, and he himself was Regidor of "this good town of Guatemala," oppressed with years, and with his limbs too stiff for any riding, but on a pacing mule, he chanced to come upon a history of the "Conquest of New Spain" that drove him furious.

He loved Cortés as perhaps few soldiers in the world have loved their generals, but to hear all the Conquest put down to his right arm, whilst he himself and all his comrades were quite forgotten and not named, stirred up the feelings of equality and pride, dear to all Spanish hearts. It was the braver of him, for he was poor, unlearned, and of all those who sailed from Cuba with Cortés, only five poor old men were left alive, crippled by debts and wounds.

Odds never daunted him his whole life long, either by land or sea, or if he fought with Christians or Infidels, and though his last adventure into literature was to the full as desperate, all things considered, as any he had yet encountered, he boldly plunged into it, and wrote a book unequalled in its kind in the whole world. Good faith and a dry Spanish humour illumine every page.

After the fashion of the other conquerors of the New World he thought that he and all his fellows were

instruments of God. This attitude persists most strongly in the human mind down to the present day.

Arrogance, cruelty, and pride of race, a lust of gold and a blind faith in their religion, together with an absolute contempt for that of other men, were the chief faults of all the Spanish conquerors; but in the main these faults are incidental to mankind, especially in those who find themselves placed, as they were, like gods amongst a weaker race of men. Who dare arise to-day in England or in France, in Spain or any other land and criticise them? Rather, it best becomes us to wonder at their exploits, forget their crimes and ask forgiveness for the sins of the same nature that we, the men of progress and of light, have fallen into, not having their excuse. They thought themselves the instruments of God, just as we think ourselves the instruments of progress, and it may be that both they and ourselves have been deceived about the estimate we put upon our deeds.

Cortés wrote well and picturesquely. Pedro de Alvarado in the two letters that remain to us of his, was clear and perspicacious, and neither of them coloured facts or canted, or seemed to think that anything he did was in the least unusual for gentlemen and Spaniards or for good Christians to do. Most of the conquerors who wrote were men in high position, well educated and obliged by their rank to deal rather with facts than with those little incidental things that preserve men and manners for us, and make the difference between a history and a chronicle.

Both Alvarado and Cortés wrote reports, which, as

they dealt with stirring times and a new world, were interesting and strange; but Bernal Diaz writes of men round the camp fire, preserves their nicknames, tells of their weaknesses, and makes us see, not only them, but him himself, just as they sat and talked, cleaning their arms, or softening their wounds with grease taken from a dead Indian, "for medicines we had none." Withal, he was a man, honest and steadfast to his leaders, patient in hardships and a great lover of good horses, a taste befitting to a conqueror, for by the aid of horses "under God" was Mexico subdued. So much he loved them that he has set down the names and colours, qualities and faults of all the horses and the mares which came in the first fleet that sailed from Cuba with Cortés.

In a few lines he has embalmed the memory of Motilla, the best horse, as he says, either in the Indies or in Spain. We know Motilla as we know few living horses in the world, almost as well as the bright bay with three white stockings, and the long crinkly mane, turning his head towards Spinola, in the "Surrender of the town of Breda," under the clump of spears.

Here and there through his book are scattered passages that the whole world knows or should know, such as the fall of Mexico, with the sudden ceasing of the tumult that had gone on for ninety days, "so that we, the soldiers, all were deaf, as if we had been in a belfry with all the bells ringing, and they had all suddenly been stopped."

This and his description of Cortés, one of the most complete and most minute presentments of a man in any literature, together with his fine analysis of his own

feelings when entering a fight, place the old soldier who "knew no Latin" as he says, in the first flight of natural writers . . . of those men who write, as it were, by nature, having been born free of the mystery, and not as is more usual, having bought their freedom at the price of toil. As to the man himself, he was undoubtedly brave and resourceful, weighty in council also, for on more than one occasion Cortés himself would have avoided losses and defeat, had he but followed his advice. He was not bloodthirsty, taking no delight in slaughter for itself, but at the same time looking on the killing of the Infidel as something necessary, but not to be indulged in as a sport. In fact, he had a sense of justice in his dealings with the Indians, and opposed all wanton cruelty. Of all the writers on the conquest, either of Mexico or of Peru, he stands the first in broad humanity, a quality which with his vigorous style and terse Castilian speech, make him a personal friend when you have read his book, just in the way that Sancho Panza and Don Quixote are our friends and not mere characters.

The book has often been translated, and Mr. Maudslay's version taken from that of Don Genaro Garcia (Mexico, 1894) is beyond praise, for truth and accuracy. No one has written of the man with sympathy, for Prescott did not understand him, being weighed down with prejudice and pride, both of religion and of race.

It pleases me to think (though it may be that I deceive myself), that I have had some opportunities to understand a man such as was Bernal Diaz; more opportunities perhaps than many others who write

greatly, better than myself, but have lived different lives.

Certain it is that I know little Latin (just as he did), or at the best enough to read an epitaph upon a tombstone, and that but haltingly. Long years ago, I too have heard the Indians striking their hands upon their mouths as they came on, swaying like centaurs on their horses and brandishing their spears. I too have shivered by camp fires, have known night marches under the southern stars, down in the grassy Pampas, far below Cholechel, in Mexico, in Texas, and in Paraguay.

Horses I have owned, especially a little Doradillo . . . but, *basta*, that way anecdotage lies.

Lastly, the horses and the men I knew in those days, as was the case with Bernal Diaz when he wrote, are now long dead.

R. B. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM.

# BERNAL DIAZ DEL CASTILLO

## CHAPTER I

Bernal Diaz del Castillo was born in the Castilian city of Medina del Campo in 1492, the very year of the discovery of America. His father was Don Francisco Diaz del Castillo, called, as his son informs us, *el Galan* (the Gallant), and his mother Doña Maria Diaz Rejon. The family came from the mountains of Burgos, where still stood their house in Aontonera del Valle de Toranzo when Bernal Diaz wrote his chronicle.

The curious old city of Medina del Campo is situated in a vast brown plain. The sandy streets run out and lose themselves in the surrounding country, just as some rivers lose themselves in various mouths before they reach the sea. The great Castillo de la Mota, now ruinous, but once a favourite residence of the Catholic kings, and prison of Cæsar Borgia, guards it upon a little hill. To-day, only a gipsy family feeds a few goats in its deserted courtyards, and the great keep stands up, deserted, and disintegrating in the sun. Far away towers La Sierra de los Gredos, and just

outside the town extends a wood of pines looking like green umbrellas growing in the sand.

In the enormous and gaunt *plaza* still stands the house of Pedro Dueñas, the great merchant who offended Charles v., that austere prince of light-horsemen, by his lavishness in entertainment and display. The house with its *almenas* and horseshoe doorway still remains, inside and out, much as when Dueñas burnt the cinnamon in the great silver *brasero*, that so much scandalised the King. Although presumably it was not built when Bernal Diaz played with other brown, beady-eyed children in the great sandy square, he must have known many a mansion of the kind. As he grew up he must have talked with many soldiers returned from the New World.

Medina, with its mediæval air, its Jewry, its quarter where the Moriscos dwelt, known to the Christians as the *Moreria*, must have received a shock as startling to its slumbrous existence when the first conquerors came home as it had done not five-and-twenty years before when it learned that the last stronghold of the Moors in Spain had fallen. Since then it has slept on. The train that passes through its little station several times a day leaves it unawakened, and as it rumbles on towards Madrid or to Irun the feeding goats breathe freely, and the disintegration of the great Castillo de la Mota, with its four flanking pepper-boxes, slowly goes on under the rain and sun.

However, in its wide and now deserted streets, which in those days were full of traffic and of bustle,—for the old town was a great market for men from every part of Europe,—the young Bernal Diaz must have heard

strange tales about the Indies, enough to fire his blood. Cuba had been subdued and colonised to some extent, Jamaica had been won and all the islands of the group Columbus first had seen. On the mainland the town of Cartagena had been built, that port from which in after times the Plate fleet was to sail.

Nombre de Dios was a struggling settlement. Don Pedro Arias de Avila was on his way to supersede and execute Vasco Nuñez de Balboa, he who first saw the Pacific from his tall peak; Ojeda, the young knight who walked along the beam left by the workmen in the Giralda Tower at Seville, at a giddy height before the Catholic kings, and threw a tennis ball over the top, was dead.

The Admiral of the Indies, "Quel gentil Genovese," had finished the voyage of his life, found his New World, and died, unhonoured, with his chains hanging always in his sight to keep the memory of his king's ingratitude in mind.

The conquest, although well begun, had yielded little of great value, for Cuba, as Bernal Diaz says, was only used to grow *cazabe*, and to breed horses, and to fatten pigs. Peru and Mexico were yet unheard of, but the fame of the New World stirred in men's hearts and set them itching to be off.

Cortés, Pizarro, Almagro, Soto, and the rest were all, or nearly all, from the province of Estremadura; but Bernal Diaz was a true Castilian of the stock of those who later on composed the celebrated infantry that marched with Alba, conquered, with the Great Captain, and under Julian Romeo waded breast-high in winter to the siege of Bergen, and who in Italy swept through

the land like locusts, carrying destruction where they went.

About his youth and childhood we know nothing, and all the personal details that he has set down about himself are that he was of "reasonable stature,"[1] and that he was active, quick, and well-proportioned, and that his comrades called him *el Galan.* The picture of him preserved in Guatemala shows him as a man between fifty and sixty years of age. His beard is ample and trimmed into a point, his moustaches turned up a little, after the fashion of the time. His eyebrows are well arched and his forehead peculiarly high. His whole air is resolute and with something typically Spanish in the whole countenance.

Nothing is known with certainty as to the original. The impression on the front page is taken from the edition of his works by Don Genaro Garcia (Mexico, 1904), which was done from a photograph furnished to Don Genaro by the Government of Guatemala. We may therefore imagine him, when he first sailed, a typical Castilian youth, dark-haired, well built, reserved and quiet in demeanour, but with that air of resolution that especially distinguishes the inhabitants of old Castile.

Diaz, who has left us such striking pictures of Cortés, of Montezuma, Alvarado, and Christobal de Oli, has set down almost nothing of himself.

His chronicle begins with one of the most touching little prologues that the world of letters knows.

After having confessed that he is an ignorant man,[2] and that he scarcely dares to write a prologue or a *preambulo* (as he calls it), he strikes for a moment a high

[1] *Razonable cuerpo.*

[2] *Nosoy Latino.*

note of justifiable pride mingled with modesty, a combination quite befitting to a man who had borne his part so bravely in the great events he is preparing to describe.

"It would require," he says, "another eloquence and rhetoric than mine to describe the heroic deeds and actions that we performed when we won New Spain and its provinces, in companionship with the stout and valiant captain Don Hernando Cortés.

Then his age and misfortunes rise to his mind, and he continues: "But what I saw, for I was in it, fighting and as a true eye-witness, I will write, by the help of God, as plainly as I can, without turning to one side or the other, and because I am old, of more than eighty-four years of age, and have lost my sight and hearing, and by bad luck I have no other riches to leave to my sons and descendants than this my true and notable history."

He launches into his chronicle with the easy air of one who draws a sword—

"In this narrative[1] from the year 1814 when I came from Castile, and began to fight[2] on the Main Land, and to discover Yucatan and New Spain, and after the fashion of my ancestors, and of my father and my brother, who were always servants of the Crown, and of the Catholic kings, Don Hernando and Doña Isabel of glorious memory, I wishing to resemble them a little, and as at that time, 1514 as I have said, there came as governor of the Main Land a gentleman, one Pedrarios Davila, I determined to come with him . . .

[1] *Relacion.*

[2] *Commençe á melitar* (*militar*). There is no word in English that expresses *militar* succinctly, for it is not only "to fight," but also implies to be a soldier.

and to spare words I will not say anything of what happened on the voyage, except that, sometimes with good weather, at times with contrary winds, we came to Nombre de Dios, for it is so named, and after having been there three or four months a pestilence broke out."

Thus at twenty-two years of age he found himself in the New World. Nombre de Dios, always an unhealthy and a dull place, was then more dull than usual, for the dissension between Pedro Arias and Vasco Nuñez had not broken out, and as Bernal Diaz says, "there was nothing to conquer, and all the country was at peace."

Bernal Diaz was not a man for times of peace, and so, in company with certain hidalgos, soldiers, and "people of quality," he asked permission to go to Cuba, where Diego Velazquez had just been appointed governor. From that instant, till as an old man he began to write his memoirs, his life was a long series of adventures, both by sea and land.

After having obtained permission, he and his companions embarked in a "good ship," arrived in Cuba, kissed the governor's hands, and received the usual promises of protection and of help. What they asked for was to have Indians given to them in *encomienda*, a phrase which, as "indentured labour" does to-day, really means slavery. Such and such a man had "good Indians" (*buenos Indios*) is a phrase that frequently occurs in Bernal Diaz's pages. He uses it much in the same way as a man might say so-and-so had a herd of shorthorns or of polled Angus.

No Indians, good or otherwise, were forthcoming, and three years had elapsed since he first landed in the New World. He lacked advancement, as indeed he

did all his life through; but not for want of striving for it. As he says himself: "As we had none of us made anything worth mentioning, a hundred and ten of us, all friends, who had come over from the Mainland,[1] and some who had no Indians, from Cuba, all determined to put our money into a common stock and go off to discover unknown lands."

These forlorn adventurers induced a gentleman who was rich and much respected in the island to be their captain. Then they bought three ships. Two were bought cheaply; and although Bernal Diaz says that they were of "good capacity," they turned out wretched and uncaulked. The third they got on credit from the Governor, Diego Velazquez. He, perhaps fearing that the rabble rout of poor adventurers would never pay him for his ship, wished to oblige them to call at certain islands between Cuba and the Honduras coast, called Los Guanajes, seize the inhabitants, and bring them back as slaves.

The soldiers, though they were ready enough to have taken Indians in Cuba, in *encomienda*, drew the line at this. Bernal Diaz writes with some heat: "We saw this was a thing that neither God or yet the King commanded us to do . . . to turn those who were free to slaves." He says especially, "when we saw," so that no doubt he had a voice in the decision; and what he says gives us the index to his character, upright and just, without the least idea of anything outside the ordinary morality of the times in which he lived.

The Governor, who no doubt made what Diaz might have called "a rabbit's laugh,"[2] saw he had gone

[1] *Tierra firme.*

[2] *La risa del conejo.*

too far, and said that their protest was a just one, and it was better far to go out to discover unknown lands than to enslave free men. However, after this he was obliged to help them both with stores and with provisions for their voyage. Nothing in the history of the conquest of the New World brings more home to one the difficulties men had to face than the description of this "poor man's fleet"[1] that Bernal Diaz gives. He tells how they put on board *cazabe*—flour and bacon, buying the pigs at three dollars each—for in those days in Cuba there were neither sheep nor cows. When they had got their provisions all aboard, and had hired pilots, they all embarked and sailed to a port called Ajaraco, where they picked up a priest "who with kind words and promises we induced to come with us." Then they set apart a soldier to have charge of the royal fifth.

Lastly, after hearing mass, and recommending themselves to God our Lord and to the Blessed Virgin, they set forth into the unknown. At this time Bernal Diaz was twenty-five years of age, and his three years in the Indies had probably inured him to a hard life, and fortified his mind. His first voyage of discovery was of a kind that must have tried his nerves, for all their steadiness.

He and his fellow-soldiers set out, not in the least knowing where they would arrive, except in a vague way, upon the mainland coast. Though they had pilots, as he calls them, they must have been really navigators, for he expressly says: "We set out towards the setting sun without a knowledge of the shoals or currents or the prevailing winds . . . with great risk

[1] *Armada de hombres pobres.*

to ourselves." After twenty-one days' sailing from Cuba they saw land.

One wonders how they could have sailed so many days without striking some island or another in those seas. Instantly they found themselves surrounded by canoes. For a wonder, the usual fighting that breaks out whenever white men visit primitive races did not come first from them. The chief of the tribe into whose territory they had disembarked attacked them suddenly.

Bernal Diaz says, at the first flight of arrows fifteen of his companions were wounded. Then the Indians attacked them hand to hand with lances. This was his first fight, and he appears to have behaved himself as a stout soldier. Naturally the Indians got the worst of the attack, and fled, leaving fifteen dead. The Spaniards advanced and took their village, and found in it several small articles of gold.

He says: "When we saw these, and that there were several houses made of stone, we were delighted to have found such a land, for in those days Peru was not discovered or known till years had passed." Here the first chance of making proselytes occurred. Father Gonzalez was on the gospel trail, and as the soldiers had taken two Indians prisoners, he straight baptized them under the names of Julian and Melchor.

Bernal Diaz, always on the watch to set down and preserve the human document, says that both of them were cross-eyed. So with their cross-eyed Christians and certain idols made of gold that they had found in an *adoratorio* (that is, a place of prayer), they once more, after dressing all the wounded, put out again to

sea. After fifteen days' more navigation in their "poor man's fleet," they landed to take in water at Campeche. Here Diaz had his second baptism of blood. The Indians came upon them and drove them, retreating slowly, with their faces to the foe, back to their ships.

Hardly had they embarked than a fierce gale sprang up which lasted for four days. At last they had to anchor; then their wretched cables parted, and they were drifting on to the rocks when with some old ropes they strengthened the remaining one, and then the anchor held. "God willed it," says Bernal Diaz, "that we should be saved"; but it never seems to strike him that God might just as well have sent no storm.

When at last, at a place called Potonchan, they had got their water-barrels filled, they had the first intimation, although they could not understand it at the time, that Spaniards had visited the coast, for the Indians called out to them, "Castilan, Castilan." They were, as it appears, struck with the word, and talked it over, but could not make it out. At nightfall the Indians all gathered together, and it was seen they were preparing an attack.

"We consulted," says Bernal, "with our captain, and between ourselves; and, as is usual in such cases, some said one thing and some another. One party was for instant embarkation; the other for falling on the Indians before they could deliver their attack."

Their position was not enviable, for there were, as the writer says, three hundred Indians to each man. He himself seems to have been in favour of an instant

onslaught and quotes with approbation the old proverb, "He who attacks prevails."[1]

This is the first time that we get a real insight into his character; but it is one that shows us what he was. During his long and hazardous career he still continued to the end always in favour of a bold attack. On several occasions his voice was raised in after years for a like policy. In fact, it is the policy that a man (and a prudent man) almost invariably adopts when fighting with wild tribes.

On this occasion dawn caught them still deliberating, and at the usual time—which I suppose was just when the first streaks of light were breaking through the night—the Indians delivered their attack. Arabs and Indians, and in general all wild men, attack at dawn, rarely at night, either because of superstitions that they hold, or because they know that just at daybreak men who have spent the night in watching and peering out into the darkness, are tired and stiff with cold, and not in a condition to resist.

The attack was pushed so strongly home that the adventurers were driven to the shore, fighting each yard of their retreat. They heard the Indians calling out "*Al Calchoni*," which it appears meant, "Kill the Captain"; and Bernal tells us that their leader received twelve arrow wounds, and he himself three dangerous wounds, one in the left side which penetrated into the hollow of his chest. This was the first of all the countless wounds that he received during his long career. He says that it was dangerous, but nothing else, and goes on to relate that they lost fifty of their company,

[1] *Quien acomete, vence.*

of whom two were carried off alive. These were "one Alonso Bote,"[1] and the other an old Portuguese.

Those who have seen a prisoner after death, who has died under his Indian captor's hands, may form some sort of an idea about their fate. Those who have not—and I suppose most of my readers fall into this class—need waste no time in racking their imagination, for the imagination of the Indians is sure to have outgone theirs at least a hundredfold.

Still fighting steadily, the Spaniards slowly were driven back towards their boats, with Bernal Diaz crippled (as we may suppose by his three wounds) struggling along in the front rank. When they got to the shore, the rush for safety was so great that several of the boats were sunk, and many of the soldiers killed by the Indians as they endeavoured to get in. "When we saw ourselves safe aboard the ships, we counted up our dead, and found that fifty-seven were missing." These had died either of their wounds or thirst.

Their wounds were sore with the salt water, and "some of our men cursed the pilot Anton de Alaminos and his voyage of discovery . . . for they were sure that where we were, was on an island, and not on the mainland."

Having got to sea, they found only one sailor was unwounded, and the general, Francisco Hernandez de Cordoba, had twelve arrow wounds, of which he subsequently died on his return to Cuba, in his own house. They were thus in a miserable plight, and at each place they landed to take water the

[1] *Un Alsonso Bote.*

Indians attacked them instantly. At last they landed in Florida, as their commander was almost dead from thirst. There Bernal Diaz was wounded in the arm; but, as he says, not badly. In fact, it could not have been severe, for he with the rest charged with the water to their waists upon the Indians and slew many of them. Here they lost the one man who had remained without a wound in the first fight, and were again forced to embark.

"Oh what a hard thing it is" (he says) "to go out to discover new lands, and in what a way did we put ourselves into peril! Only those who have passed such labours as those which we endured can understand what we passed through."

Though he wrote this at the same time he wrote the rest of his book—that is, in Guatemala, fifty years after the events—these his first adventures seem to have made a deep impression upon his mind. Although he was in just as perilous a plight times without number in later years, he never breaks out again in the same style, but writes of what he suffered in a spirit almost of satisfaction with himself.

When they got back to the Habana many of the wounded men succumbed, and all they had to show were but two Indian prisoners, "whom we called Melchorillo and Juanillo," and several boxes and wreaths and diadems of gold. These the governor took and sent home to Castile, with a few idols of burnt clay and figures of animals. In Spain some of the wiseacres judged that the Indians who made the things must have descended from the Jews that Titus and Vespasian had banished from Jerusalem. They might as well have said

that they were descended from the dwellers in the cities of the plains; but the opinion that the Indians were Jews prevailed amongst the unlearned and the pious almost to present times.

What is interesting in this first expedition in which Bernal Diaz had a share is that the first stone houses found in the New World were seen, and he says: "As Peru was not discovered, it occupied men's minds." He sums up the whole fact of the adventure thus:—

"So that all of us soldiers who went out on this discovery spent all we had, and were glad enough to return alive and not remain behind with those who died. Our captain (as I said) died shortly after his return, and all of us were long in getting cured of our wounds; and after counting up, we found that about sixty of our men had died. This was the gain we brought from that discovery."

He does not rail at Fate, still less at Providence; indeed, a Spaniard of those days was as little likely to do so as an Arab, for both take all that Allah sends without a word.

Bernal Diaz and certain of his friends who lacked advancement in the Habana—for the governor, Diego Velazquez, gave them no Indians either good or bad—hired a canoe which was going laden with cotton shirts to take them to La Trinidad. If his last voyage had been adventurous and without profit to him, except in that experience which a man usually buys dearly, makes but little use of, and only values when the time is past to profit by it, this proved disastrous indeed.

After eleven days of travelling, partly under sail and partly paddling, a storm arose that cast the canoe upon

a reef. There they undressed and swam to shore, naked and penniless, and miles from where they had to go. Their sufferings were terrible, for the fierce wind and sun had chapped their skin, so that the blood dropped from the cracks upon the ground. Starving and footsore, and after having torn the bark from trees to make some sort of a protection for their feet, wreathed round the waists with leaves like an heraldic "salvage man," at last they reached an open beach of sand. In two days' travel they arrived at a small Indian settlement called Yaguarana, of which at that time, as God willed it, the priest was Bartolomé de las Casas, who was to rise to fame, and die the apostle of the Indians, and there they got relief. Thence they went to a town called Chipiona, and Bernal Diaz says: "A friend of mine, Antonio de Medina, gave me the kind of clothes that they used in that town. Then with my poverty and hardships I went to Santiago de Cuba." There he saw the governor, and "kissed his hands."

The governor promised to write to Spain and lay his case before the King, but in the meantime said to him: "My son, go with the expedition I am fitting out, and I will undertake that you are duly honoured in it."

One would have thought that Bernal Diaz had had almost enough of barren honour, but, like an honest soldier as he was, he seems to have set about his preparations without a protest or a word. In fact, quite undeterred by his bad luck, he and above two hundred of his comrades put what they had into the common store to purchase food and arms.

In 1518 Grijalva's expedition sailed to Yucatan. With it went Bernal Diaz and others, who in the future were

captains of Cortés'. "As these," says Bernal Diaz, "were all gentlemen, and came as captains, it would be discourteous to name them dryly" (that is, without their titles).

They were Pedro de Alvarado ("he of the leap"), Francisco de Montejo, and Alonso de Avila. Avila always had been the cradle of good fighters, as the two lines

> "El que mas habil es para la guerra
> Se llama Avilés en esa tierra"

amply testify.

"Know therefore," says Bernal, "that Pedro de Alvarado was a valorous gentleman who, after that New Spain was conquered, was Governor and Adelantado of the provinces of Guatimala, Honduras, and Chiapa, also Commendator of Santiago. Also Francisco de Montejo was a brave gentleman, and he became Governor of Yucatan."

Others, in writing of an expedition as important as was that Grijalva led, would have confined themselves to what are called hard facts. That is to say, they would have written only about the fights, the number of the Indians killed, the signs of gold, and of their own ideas about what they had done. When one reads histories of that kind written by able, but wooden-headed men, you shut them with a sigh, lamenting that all human interest has been so rigidly suppressed. Bernal Diaz wrote in a different way, and so he breaks off in his tale to tell us how the town of Matanzas[1] in Cuba came by its name.

It happened, so he says, that a ship coming from the

[1] *Matanzas*=the Massacre, or the Slaughtering.

Bahamas was wrecked upon the Cuban coast, close to the river and the port known to-day as Matanzas. In it there were some thirty Spaniards, men and women; and the Indians of the place, seeing them helpless, set upon them and killed all but one woman and three men. This woman, as she was handsome, was carried off and married to a chief. "I knew her" (Bernal says) "years afterwards, when the whole island was subdued and she was taken from the Chief and married to a man who lived in the town of La Trinidad, one Pedro Sanchez Farfan. I also knew the men. One was called Mexia. He was an old man, and a native of Jerez. Another was Juan de Santisteban, who was a native of Madrigal. The last was named Cascorro, born in Huelva. This fellow was a fisherman, and the Chief, who had him in his power, had married him to his own daughter, and his ears and nose were pierced just like the Indians'."

Details of this kind make a book of history really a history of what took place, and are worth pages of generalities, if we wish to understand the times. For all his habit of digression, and his excursions into what he himself calls old tales, few writers of the time (or for that matter of any other time) had a keener view of what was necessary to observe in expeditions of the kind. After his dive into etymology, he tells how they arrived at Cozumel, and that the island had a good harbour and a well-built town, and that the bay was clear of reefs.

He and some others landed, and found no one but two old men and a young Indian girl, who was good-looking and who talked to them in the language of Jamaica (that is, in the Carib tongue), "and as I and several of the soldiers knew that speech, which is the same as that of

Cuba, we asked her how she came to be so far away from home."

It appeared she had been shipwrecked from a canoe, in which she and ten Indians of Jamaica had started out to fish. Her comrades had been sacrificed to the idols and she herself enslaved; and as no Indians but herself and the two old men were seen, "Captain Juan de Grijalva saw it was losing time to wait, so we embarked, the Jamaican Indian woman came with us, and we set forth again upon our voyage." They were now running down the coast of Mexico towards Yucatan, and at last came to the same place (Champotan) where the Indians had attacked them in the former expedition under Hernandez de Cordoba.

No sooner had they landed than they were attacked. This time they were prepared, and every soldier wore a jacket made of quilted cotton that was arrow-proof. For all that they lost three men, and Captain Juan Grijalva received three arrow wounds and lost two teeth by a stone from a sling. Bernal gives us his recollections thus :—

"I remember that as we fought, we were upon a stony tract of land in which were many locusts, and as we fought they jumped up from the stones and flew about us and struck us in the face, and as the bowmen (of the enemy) were numerous and shot their arrows at us as thick as hail, they looked like locusts flying, and we forgot to raise our bucklers, thinking the arrows were but locusts, and thus the arrows wounded us. At other times we thought the locusts were a flight of arrows. This gave a lot of trouble."

Few would have remembered such an incident

after fifty years, and fewer still would have had the sense to write it down, even if they had remembered it. The next place where they landed was at the mouth of the Tabasco River, which they called the Rio de Grijalva, after their captain.

Julianillo and Melchorejo (for Bernal Diaz gives them all kinds of diminutives of their respective names) understood the language well. Grijalva told the Indians that they came from a far country and were the subjects of a great Emperor, whose name was Charles. He also said that as the aforesaid Emperor had many powerful vassals, the Chief of Tabasco should recognise him too for his superior. He also offered him glass beads, those herald Mercuries of civilisation the whole world over, in exchange for hens.

The Chief replied, with the unanswerable logic of the savage mind, that as to taking the glass beads, he was quite content; but that it seemed a little strange that men who came out of the sea, and who had seen them for the first time in their lives, should wish to give them a new lord. These sort of savage arguments were generally answered with a discharge of firearms, to show the arguers that logic does not always pay, unless you have good guns. On this occasion Grijalva was obliged to temporise, not being strong enough to use force, the greatest argument of civilised and of uncivilised savages alike.

This was the first occasion at which Bernal Diaz had assisted at a palaver of the kind, though in the future he attended many such a one under the banners of Cortés.

A little farther down the coast Pedro de Alvarado gave the first indications of his spirit of insubordination, that afterwards cost Cortés so dear in Mexico. He ran his ship up a river without orders from his chief, and kept the expedition waiting; and when he did appear, his captain, not unnaturally, took umbrage at his zeal.

Still farther down the coast, at the mouth of a river that they named "El Rio de Vanderas,"[1] Bernal Diaz witnessed a scene Arcadian in itself, and yet he renders it, by force of simple language, still more Arcadian, and makes it read like an idyl by Theocritus.

The Chief of the district was the first man who made known to Europeans the name and power of the Great Montezuma[2] and the name of Mexico.

This Chief, together with two others, one of whom was a governor of Montezuma's, invited all the officers of Grijalva's fleet to a conference and a banquet, for the meeting had the character of both.

"As we disembarked," Diaz says, "we found the three Caciques,[3] and with them many other Indians in attendance. They had (before them?) many chickens of that land, maize bread, which they are accustomed to eat, and fruits, as pineapples and *zapotes*, which in other places are called *mimayes*, and they were sitting under the shade of trees on mats laid on the ground. On them they bade us seat ourselves,

[1] Diaz frequently writes "Vandera" for "Bandera," so that we know exactly how he talked.

[2] Bernal Diaz invariably refers to Montezuma as "el gran Montezuma."

[3] "Cacique" is the word all the old Spanish writers used in speaking of an Indian chief. It is, I think, a Carib word originally, but has long passed into the Spanish language.

by signs; for Julianillo, as he was from Cape Catoche, did not understand their tongue. Then they brought braziers made of clay, full of charcoal, and censed us with a kind of gum which smells like frankincense."

The chiefs and Spanish officers ate, talked, and parted friends, exchanging presents such as beads, hawkbells, and other things which the Indians must have longed for since the beginning of the world, but could not come by till they met the Spaniards, for little images of gold, which images we are glad to learn were not of a high value, as the gold was alloyed. Thus both parties parted, satisfied and pleased.

Such meetings must have been frequent in those days, and evidently Bernal Diaz felt, though he does not say so, how interesting the little ceremony was. When they sailed, they took away with them an Indian who came voluntarily, and was baptized under the name of Francisco, and who, Bernal Diaz says, he saw long afterwards living near Mexico.

To what strange chance the names of many places in the New World were due is seen by the story that Diaz tells of a place three or four days from where the chiefs had given them the feast. It appears that they arrived at a place called Culua, and that upon the very day they went ashore a human sacrifice was going on. They asked the newly Christianised Francisco what was the cause of it, and he replied, being a stammerer, "Ulua, Ulua," meaning it was the custom of the people of Culua; and from this stammering answer San Juan de Ulua took its name. Diaz tells us also

that the name Yucatan was the mistake of a Spaniard who heard the natives say the words "Yuca Tale," which, he says, meant "Yes, there is Yuca"; and he laughs heartily at what he styles "the so-called land of Yucatan."

The expedition had a better ending than the former one, in which Bernal had made his first voyage as a conqueror. It arrived at Santiago de Cuba with about twenty thousand dollars' worth of gold they had collected, and added so much to the knowledge of the coast that in the future a voyage to Mexico became less of an adventure into uncharted seas.

As it happened, although neither of the two expeditions were aware of it, news had reached Montezuma of their arrival, and even pictures of the leaders of the Spaniards been sent to Mexico. Upon this expedition Bernal Diaz planted several orange pips, which grew, and from them came all the oranges of Mexico, for it appears the tree was quite unknown on the Mainland.

"I want to tell," he says, "how I sowed some orange pips close to an idol house, and it was in this way. As there were many mosquitoes on that river,[1] I went to sleep close to a high idol house, and near to it I sowed seven or eight pips that I had brought from Cuba, and they took root, for it appears the priests of the idols took care the ants did not destroy them, and weeded and watered them when they saw that the plants were different from any that they knew. I have remembered this and set it down because those

[1] It seems to have been in the Province of Panuco.

were the first orange trees which were planted in New Spain. . . . After the land was pacified (that is, conquered), I went back for my plants, transplanted them, and found they had done well."

Participation in these two expeditions had turned the raw Castilian youth into a hardened soldier, fit to bear his part in the adventures that were waiting for him under Cortés. Before he launches into his real narrative of the Conquest of Mexico, he devotes a chapter to the errors of other chroniclers, especially to those of Francisco Lopez de Gómara, who was an educated man.

"As I was writing this account I saw by accident a history written in good style . . . by one Francisco Lopez de Gómara . . . and when I read his sounding paragraphs and saw my own work was so rude, I left off writing and even was ashamed that it should appear amongst notable people, and being thus perplexed, as I have said, I began to read again . . . what Gómara had written in his book . . . and I saw that he was all out . . . and when he set about to speak of cities and their population, that it was all the same to him whether he wrote down eight or eight thousand. Again, about the enormous slaughter that he said we made, when we ourselves were not above four hundred men, who had enough to do to defend ourselves from being killed or taken prisoners. Even if the Indians all had their hands tied, we could not have killed so many of them as he says. I swear, Amen, that every day we were praying God and our Lady that we should not be cut to bits. Coming back then to our story, Alaric, that famous king, and Atila, that proud warrior, did

not kill half so many in the plains of Catalonia, as he says we killed."[1]

All this, and many a passage of the sort, show Bernal Diaz as a lover of the truth, simple and steadfast, modest about his own attainments, and most lovable.

[1] In all instances, I translate freely, and do not profess to give Bernal Diaz's exact words, but have tried to give them the feeling in English that he conveys in Spanish, and I have preserved his curious construction.

# CHAPTER II

The governor of Cuba, Diego Velazquez, spurred on by the accounts brought by the two former expeditions, determined now (1518) to send another to the coast of Mexico.[1] This was the memorable expedition that Cortés commanded, and how he came to do so Diaz relates in his inimitable style. After the fashion of most appointments of the kind, it seems to have been the result of an intrigue. However, Diaz, with his eye for facts, notices this but briefly, and at once begins to tell us of Cortés.

"There was," he says, "a good hidalgo, called Hernando Cortés, a native of Medellin, who was the son of Martin Cortés de Monroy and Catalina Pizarro Altamirano, both people of good family, though poor. . . . He was of one of the good families of Estremadura, and had Indians in that island (Cuba), and a little time before had made a love match with a lady called Doña Catalina Suarez Pacheco."

It appears that from the first Bernal Diaz conceived both admiration and respect for this good hidalgo, although that did not blind him to his faults. In everything he did and wrote, Diaz shows his strong common

[1] The name, of course, was not applied yet to the country, and only rumours of Montezuma and his power had reached the Spaniards on the coast.

sense and his clear-sightedness. So he loved Cortés for his good qualities, his courage, tenacity, patience in hardships and in difficulties. He admired his fluency in speech, his tact and his diplomacy; and though he made a hero of him, his admiration was the more worth having, for he perceived his hero was a man.

One thing is notable about both Diaz and his contemporary, Ciezo de Leon, who with Cortés himself and Don Alonso de Ercilla were amongst the only actual conquerors to write about the wars. They all insisted on the dangers they had run, and Diaz in especial complains that Fray Francisco de Gómara in his history makes light of their achievements. He says, talking about the retreat from Mexico and of the siege, ". . . we escaped, but some four hundred and forty men, and all were wounded . . ." and "yet he says (Gómara) that we found everything like going to a feast." To-day the contrary tendency is to be observed: the soldier, when he writes, often makes light of his achievements and the perils he has run; but the civilian writer, who has never seen a fight, dwells on each horror and each incident, till he makes war even more hideous than it is.

So does taste change as time goes on, and who shall say which taste is best—that of to-day, or that of the days when Mexico was won? For all is fashion, as it is in the arts, in literature, and everything out of the region of mere facts.

As Diego de Velazquez, Governor of Cuba, was fitting out another expedition for the shores of Mexico, there was much competition as to the command. Diaz and those who had been with him in his expedition were not unnaturally in favour of the claims of Juan de

Grijalva, who, Diaz says, was a good captain and knew how to command. As a good soldier, Diaz always knew exactly who was born to command and who was not—as, for example, when he speaks about Christobal de Oli, whom he styles "brave, but fit not to command, but to be commanded." However, Diego Velazquez gave the command to Hernando Cortés, but instantly seems to have been seized with qualms about his loyalty.

His suspicions were fostered by his friends, who set a half-witted man, one known as Mad Cervantes, to shout out on a Sunday as they came out from Mass, "Oh, Diego, Diego, what sort of captain have you chosen? . . . This man from Medellin is sure to steal your fleet." This fellow, set on by the Velazquez family, was, as Bernal Diaz said, not so far out, for "often madmen are right in what they say"; but he goes on, "Thus was Cortés elected, by God's grace, to help our holy faith and serve His Majesty." The instant he was sure of the command, Cortés embarked in preparations, buying arms, guns and horses, and stores of every kind.

Diaz says, from that moment he commenced to take care about his clothes, and wore a plume of feathers with a gold medal that became him well. Before that he had been poor and much in debt; but now found credit, and having borrowed four thousand dollars, had a standard made, on which was written on a gold ground, with the royal arms and a cross in each corner, "Brother, let us follow the sign of the Holy Cross with true faith, and under it we shall win the day." This was in Latin, a fact which always impressed Diaz, as he knew none himself.

At this point we may take it the real life of Bernal

Diaz really began. Before, in the two expeditions in which he had served, he had been a faithful soldier, valiant and diligent, and noting down all his impressions of the new world in which he found himself; but his chief claim to fame was yet only the planting of his orange trees. Now he became a trusted soldier of Cortés, and a man of some experience, knowing, in fact, more of the country which they were sailing to, than most men in the fleet.

When they arrived at the town of La Trinidad, they picked up Pedro de Alvarado and his four brothers, Alonso de Avila, who had been with Diaz in Grijalva's expedition, Christobal de Oli, Gonzalo de Sandoval,[1] and, in fact, all the chief captains who shared the conquest with Cortés. Here they put on board much stores of bacon and cassava bread, for Diaz tells us in those days there were few cattle and few horses in the island (Cuba), and these cost a great price.

However, Cortés bought a grey mare for a hidalgo, one Alonso Puertocarrero, who had no horse, paying for her with some gold shoulder-knots, which he had had made in Santiago, and wore upon a velvet doublet, to which Diaz refers with pride. In this town came letters from Velazquez revoking his commission to Cortés. From the first Bernal Diaz was one of his strongest partisans. Cortés sent him by land with Pedro de Alvarado and fifty soldiers to the Habana, and came himself by sea, nearly being lost upon the way. In the Habana they were joined by several men of note, such as Francisco de Montejo, who after the Conquest was Governor of Yucatan.

[1] This was the owner of the good horse "Motilla."

"There came," says Diaz, "a certain Angulo . . . and one Pacheco, and So and So Gutierrez, a Rojas (not the rich Rojas) . . . and Juan de Najera (not the deaf one, who had the Tennis Court in Mexico), and many others, all men of quality, and other soldiers whose names I cannot call to mind."

After relating how Cortés was recalled by Velazquez and obeyed the summons, although he did not think fit to comply with it, as the phrase was in those times in South America,[1] Diaz refutes several errors into which the other chroniclers had fallen, especially those of Gómara.

As time goes on, he gradually forgets to do this, till the last chapter, where, with a memory almost unequalled, one would think, in any man, he names dozens of soldiers who had set out from Cuba with Cortés, recalling even their nicknames and appearance, full fifty years after the events took place.

When Cortés joined them in the Habana, which he was prevented doing for some days, as his ship had run upon a rock and had had to be unladen before they could get her off, the expedition may be said fairly to have got under way. Bernal Diaz tells us that the days they stopped in the Habana were not lost, for all the arms were overhauled, and quilted cotton jackets, that were so much used as armour by the Spaniards of the Conquest, were repaired and must have been much needed, for amongst the Indians "there is much arrow

[1] When an order came from Spain that was impossible to execute, the Viceroy, after putting the letter to his forehead just as the Arabs do to-day with an important letter, wrote on it, "I obey, but do not comply" (*Obedezco, pero no cumplo*), and the incident was closed.

and spear work, and stones fly thick as hail." They also practised shooting at a target, and Cortés for the first time set up a regular household and "began to be treated like a lord." When all was ready they embarked the horses and set up mangers in the ships for them to eat from. Their food was maize and dried grass.

"I wish to put down here," says Bernal Diaz, "from memory, all the horses and the mares that we embarked. Captain Cortés, a black bay, which died in San Juan de Ulua; Pedro de Alvarado and Hernando Lopez de Avila, a bright bay mare. She turned out very good, both for tilting and to race, when we got to New Spain. Pedro de Alvarado either bought the other share of her (from Lopez de Avila) or else took it by force. Alonso Hernandez Puertocarrero, a grey mare. She was fast, and Cortés bought her (for Puertocarrero) for a gold shoulder-knot. Juan Velazquez de Leon, another grey mare, and she was very strong; we called her Bobtail; she too was fast, and had a splendid mouth.[1] Christobal de Oli, a dark bay, a very good horse. Francisco de Montejo and Alonso de Avila, a dark chestnut horse; he was no good for war.

"Francisco de Morla, a dark bay, very fast and well bitted. Juan de Escalante, a light bay with three white feet; he was no good. Diego de Ordas, a grey mare. She was barren and a pacer, but not fast. Gonzalo Dominguez (a first-rate rider), a very good and fast dark bay horse. Pedro Gonzalez de Truxillo, a good bay horse that turned out very fast. Moron, from La

[1] *Revuelto* really means that a horse turned round very quickly. I translate it a good mouth, as no horse in England ever turns quickly, as anyone who has ever watched them can testify.

Trinidad, a piebald horse, inclining to black in the markings, with white fore-feet; he turned out worthless.

"Lares the fine horseman, a good horse, bay in colour, but rather light and a good galloper. Ortiz the musician, and one Bartolomé Garcia, who had gold mines, a good black horse that was called the Drover. He was one of the good horses that we took aboard the fleet. Juan Sedeño from the Habana, a brown mare, and this mare had a foal on board the ship. This Juan Sedeño was the richest soldier in the fleet, for he had a vessel of his own and the mare, together with a negro and much cassava bread and bacon.

"In those days there were no horses to be got, or negroes either, except at a great price, and that was why we embarked no more horses, for there were hardly any to be had; and let us leave the matter, and I will tell what happened, just as we were ready to embark."

What happened was that Velazquez the Governor had repented of his confidence, and sent one Gaspar de Garnico to take Cortés prisoner and stop the sailing of the fleet. However, as Velazquez sent no force with Don Gaspar, Cortés made, as they say in Spanish, "the tradesman's ears"[1]—that is, refused to hear—and wrote a letter to the Governor full of "good words and offers of his services," a thing which, Bernal Diaz says, Cortés knew very well how to do. In fact, one of Cortés' chief accomplishments was letter-writing, as his letters to the Emperor, Charles v., are there to testify. Few conquerors, except Julius Cæsar and Napoleon, could have equalled them.

In this instance, as his chronicler points out, he

[1] *Orejas de mercader.*

was in a secure position, for all the chief men of the fleet, such as the Alvarados, Montejo, Puertocarrero, Christobal de Oli, and "all of us," were strongly on his side. "All of us" is most significant, and shows that Bernal Diaz, though he so clearly saw Cortés' cunning in his letter-writing, was from the first his faithful partisan.

By this time Bernal Diaz seems to have become recognised as a man to be depended on, for Cortés sent him with Pedro de Alvarado, as he relates with pride, to go in front to Cozumel.

They arrived there two days before Cortés. Diaz had visited this island twice before, and probably was sent on that account. They marched into the island, and took two Indians and an Indian woman prisoners, and sacked some houses and a temple. When Cortés came he was furious, and blamed Alvarado, telling him that was not the way to pacify the land. "Pacify" was a Spanish euphuism of those days for what the French now term "pacific penetration." It meant taking other people's land without fighting, and then as now was a disastrous failure, and then as now always finished up with blood.

The idea was good enough, but never worked in practice; for after all who would not rather meet a pirate with the skull and crossbones flying boldly in the air than the same pirate with a Bible at the peak? One of the two tamed Indians, Melchorejo (for Julianillo was already civilised to death), was set to make a speech to the inhabitants of Cozumel. The captives were released, the spoil returned, and the civilising beads and hawkbells, with a "Castilian shirt" apiece, dealt out to everybody.

Cortés seems to have been genuinely determined to act kindly; but subsequent events were too strong for him. Diaz says, here "Cortés began to command properly, and our Lord gave him His grace in everything he did, especially in pacifying the people of these parts, as will appear anon." What Bernal Diaz really thought, is difficult to say, or if he thought at all about the matter, but only wrote from recollection of things long past, without connecting them with subsequent events.

After describing the review of all the ships, the horses, and the men that Cortés held in Cozumel, Diaz remarks, "I don't know why I waste so much good ink in writing of reviews." One wishes that more historians had written of such things instead of what they probably considered "serious matters," matters which, like "serious men," are often really without any weight.

Certainly Bernal Diaz was becoming a person of some importance in the expedition, chiefly on account of his two previous voyages. He tells with pride that Cortés summoned him and a certain Biscayan, Martin Ramos, and asked them what they thought the words "Castilan, Castilan," that they had heard in the Campeche coast, when they came with Francisco Hernandez de Cordoba, could possibly import.

Cortés, it seems, as was but natural, had thought the words meant that the Indians had seen Spaniards on that coast. To this Diaz agreed, and after consultation with the caciques of Cozumel it proved to be the case. Messengers were sent, and returned with the news that two Spaniards were captives with a certain chief. A letter was dispatched to them, that began "Gentlemen

and Brothers," and must have come as a surprise to both the prisoners. One of the captives, Geronimo de Aguilar, went at once to the Chief with whom he was, and tendered the money that Cortés had sent to ransom him. It was accepted, and he went at once to the village where his companion, one Gonzalo Guerrero, was detained. He, however, would not join him, saying he was a chief and married, and moreover was tattooed and had his ears bored.

"What will the Spaniards say," he said, "when they see me in such a state? Also, I have three sons, and look what pretty boys they are."

Aguilar, like the good Catholic he was, was scandalised, and told him not to forget he was a Christian, and not to lose his soul for a mere Indian woman; and if he loved his sons, to take them and come along with him. For all he said, Guerrero would not listen to him, either because he loved his wife, or on account of his scarred face. "Now," says Bernal Diaz, "this Guerrero was a sailorman and came from Palos." Perhaps this, in some measure, may explain the matter, for it appears Guerrero had got to a safe port.

Aguilar turned out of immense value to Cortés, for he could speak the Indian tongue. Nothing is more curious than the mental attitude of Spaniards of those times. Before they left the island (Cozumel), an Indian priest, standing upon an *adoratorio*, which we may translate "joss-house," dressed in black trailing robes, addressed the conquerors.

"We and Cortés stood listening to that black sermon and wondering what it meant." Melchorejo, one of the captive Indians, explained that the old priest was cursing

them. Cortés, who never lost a chance of this kind, instantly answered him in a long, pious disquisition on the faith, enjoining him to overturn his idols and come into the fold. He also (Diaz says) said many good and holy things to them, and told them to set up a cross, promising to help them in the work. As a sort of sweetener, he said the cross would bring them good harvests as well as save their souls.

This is the first time that I have ever read that the cross was to be of material good to anyone, for generally lay preachers like Cortés insist upon its spiritual benefits, and hence perhaps is the true reason of the lack of enthusiasm their preaching generally evokes.

The priest and the caciques answered their fathers had adored the idols, and that they could not throw them down. However, if the Spaniards liked to do so, they could take the risk of it. Instantly the false gods were knocked down the steps, an altar built, a cross set above it, and the conversion was completed. The chapter finishes without a comment, and in the next Diaz gives one of those bits of information that seemed no doubt superfluous at the time, but which to-day is priceless as a bit of local colouring.

When the fleet sailed, he says, Cortés commanded the flagship; Pedro de Alvarado and his brothers, a good ship called the *San Sebastian*. Alonso Hernandez Puertocarrero another ship, Francisco de Montejo, "another one, and good." Christobal de Oli another, and so on, naming every captain of the fleet. The smallest was a brigantine, and had for captain one Gines Nortes.

Each vessel had a pilot and orders how to sail and

to keep stations, and at night the signalling was done with lanterns. "So we sailed after impressing on the caciques and the priest to reverence an image of the Blessed Virgin that we had given them, and to take good care of the cross."

Bernal Diaz gives us no indication what he thought about these idol-breakings, though as time went on, and he began most probably to take himself more seriously, he too begins to preach and think that he had somehow or other benefited the Indians by all that he had done. However, he offends but little in that way; and if he did so, all would have to be forgiven for the traits of manners and of men he has preserved for us.

When Aguilar, the captive, learned where the fleet was, with the beads sent to him by Cortés he hired a canoe and six stout paddlers, and crossed to Cozumel. When the Indians saw so many Spaniards and their ships, a panic seized them, and they rushed back to their canoe. A Spaniard, one Andres de Tapia, who happened to be there, stopped them and sent a messenger to Cortés telling him seven Indians had arrived and wished to speak to him. As they sat waiting, one of the Indians came to Tapia, and in "a Spanish, mumbled and badly chewed, said, 'God and the Blessed Virgin, and Seville,' and then going to Tapia embraced him."

This man was Aguilar, for "he was neither more nor less than a mere Indian." As they walked on towards the General's tent some Spaniards asked the pseudo-Indian, "Where is the Spaniard?" This they did for Aguilar was dark of colour, wore his hair shaven like an Indian slave, and had a paddle on his shoulder.

On one foot he had a sandal, the other he carried in his girdle. His clothes were an old, rotten blanket and a worse pair of drawers, and in a packet tied in a corner of the blanket an old book of Hours, for he had been in minor orders studying for a priest.

Cortés, turning to Tapia, also said, "Where is the Spaniard?" and Aguilar, who understood him, squatting down like an Indian on his hams, said, "I am he," and then Cortés ordered him clothes, a shirt and doublet, drawers and a hood, "for there were no more clothes to give him," and "asked him of his life." He said, though still with difficulty, that he was called Geronimo de Aguilar and that he came from Ecija, and for the last eight years had been a slave.

It appeared that he had been aboard a ship going from Darien to Hispaniola, the ship had struck upon a rock, and he with others and two women had been cast upon the coast. Some had been sacrificed to idols, others had died, and he and Gonzalo Guerrero were the sole survivors of the ill-fated crew. He told how Guerrero had become a chief, and had been tattooed and his ears and his lower lip slit. As he had fought against the Spaniards when the expedition of Hernandez de Cordoba touched at Catoche, he feared to come amongst them, and had retired into the woods.

The chiefs of Cozumel, when they heard Aguilar speak in their language, made much of him ; and he, like a true Spaniard of his times, told them to reverence and worship the image of the Blessed Virgin that Cortés had given them.

"We then," says Bernal Diaz, "embarked once more, for they had been driven back to Cozumel by a great

tempest, and set our sails towards the River of Grijalva. This was the way and in no other, that we found Aguilar, and not as Gómara relates it, a thing that does not in the least surprise me, for he had all his information second hand, and so let us return again to our relation of events."

As Bernal Diaz sat in "the good town of Guatemala" almost fifty years after the wonderful adventure was ended, all that he saw and did must have come crowding back into his brain with that extraordinary wealth of detail and of memory that makes his book so interesting.

When they embarked from Cozumel a tempest sprang up and almost drove them on the coast.

"I remember," so he says, "that Aguilar told us that close to where we were was the town where he had been a prisoner, and not far off the other village where Guerrero, he of the tattooed face and cloven lip and ears, lived; that there was a little gold to be got there, and he could guide us to the place. Cortés answered him laughing, and said it was not worth the trouble, for he had not come on the expedition for a little gold, but to serve God and the King. Much gold is fitting as an offering to God, and certainly pleasing to kings, and this no one knew better than Cortés.

So they sailed on until they came to a place called Puerto de Terminos, and were rewarded by finding there a greyhound which Diaz remembered to have lost when he was on the second expedition with Grijalva. He tells us, when the greyhound saw the soldiers she bounded up to them, wagging her tail and fawning on them, and of her own accord jumped into the boat in which they had come ashore. Few historians but himself

would have had the sense to write about the finding of the hound, being consumed with the idea that to write seriously is to write only about what seems serious to dull men.

When they arrived at the Rio de Tabasco, which Bernal Diaz knew, from having been there with Grijalva, the conquest of Mexico may have been said to have begun. No one had yet been able to get a footing on the coast, and in the fights that followed Bernal Diaz took a considerable part.

Almost for the first time in the New World, the Spaniards found themselves opposed by a fierce fighting race. Hardly had they disembarked before hostilities began. The Indians began at once to pour in flights of arrows, and in the struggle Cortés himself lost one of his *alpargatas*,[1] which came off in the mud.

"We were," says Diaz, "in great danger, until having all landed, and having raised our war-cry of Saint James,[2] we forced them back and entered the chief street along with them, though they contested all the ground most valiantly, yelling and whistling and calling out, 'Al Calchoni,' which in their language signifies 'The Captain,' meaning by that that they should shoot their arrows at Cortés."

When the fight was done, Cortés took possession of the country for His Majesty the King, drawing his sword and striking it thrice on a tree, called *ceiba*,[3] that stood in the great square, and saying that if there was

[1] *Alpargatas* are canvas shoes with hemp soles.

[2] *Santiago y cierra España.* "St. James and close up for Spain," was the full cry.

[3] *Bombax Ceiba.*

anyone who should contradict his right, he challenged him to single combat. No one having answered the bold act of piracy, a notary drew up a document to the effect the country now belonged to Spain. In modern days we should have simply built a whisky store without the formality of any document; but in both cases the result would have been the same—that is, as far as the mere "natives" were concerned.

Diaz was wounded by an arrow in the thigh. The wound was slight, he says; in fact, he never dwells upon his wounds, but takes them as things inseparable from daily life—in fact, they were so in the life that he led under the banners of Cortés. After the battle they counted up the dead, and found sixteen Indian bodies in the water and on land. "There we slept with many patrols and scouts."

In the morning when they went to call up Melchorejo, the converted Indian, they found that he had slipped away into the woods. All that they found of him were his Castilian clothes, which he had left hanging upon a tree. Either the call of the wild had claimed him, or the Castilian clothes were irksome to him, as well might have been the case, when one remembers the old saying, "He who is not accustomed to wear breeches, is likely to be galled by their seams." Cortés was angry at his flight, for "he feared that he might tell the Indians things unprofitable"—that is, to Cortés.

"Let him go," says Diaz, "with bad luck, and we will come back to our tale."

The Tabasco Indians, either having been informed by Melchorejo that the Spaniards were in small numbers, or because they really were more warlike than the other

tribes, attacked again with fury. "They commenced to shoot their arrows at us, so that we could hardly bear them, for the multitude of Indians was so great. They also flung spears hardened in the fire, and stones from slings that fell like hail about us, and they had long two-handed swords that cut like razors."

However, discipline, armour, and better weapons prevailed, as they must always do, over mere patriotism, and the Indians were driven back. The Spaniards made three prisoners, and Aguilar (the interpreter) asked them why they were so mad as to come out arrayed in war against us. "Mad" was an adjective the Spaniards might have thought inapplicable if a detachment of Moors from Barbary had landed on their coasts and taken any of them prisoners when they were fighting to defend their lands.

"Massacre," "mad," and "savage" only have significance when used of those who never had corns on their feet, wore grey tweed caps, or rode a bicycle. It appeared the Indians' madness was the result, just as Cortés expected, of the "unprofitable things" that Melchorejo told them, and that he had counselled them to attack the Spaniards every day as long as any of them still were left alive.

The Spaniards saw "pacific penetration" was no good with the Tabasco River Indians, and so determined to make war upon them to the knife. The first thing that they did was to disembark the horses. Diaz, of course, has much to say about them, for all his life he loved a horse. They were so dull and stiff with the long confinement on the ships that they could scarcely gallop, and they had to be let loose to graze. When they had

rested for a day and eaten, they were all saddled and bells were hung upon their breastplates, to terrify the Indians when they charged. Another order that Cortés gave to his troops, and which he hardly ever got them to remember, was to hold their lances high and not to spear the Indians through the body, but in the faces or the head.

Had they but followed his advice, many of them would have saved their lives in the battles that ensued. It used to happen that when they drove their lances through a man, as life is very strong in Indians, the man seized the lance with both his hands and gave his fellow time to rush in and kill both rider and the horse. Now the loss of a good horse was more important in those days than that of ten stout men. Right through his book Bernal Diaz refers to this, and always says that the newcomers were almost sure to lose their lives by disregarding the advice Cortés gave to them about Indian fights. So all-important were the horses that at this juncture he specially enumerates all those soldiers (only thirteen) fit to be entrusted with a horse. Pedro de Alvarado, Puertocarrero, Francisco de Montejo, and some others, were gentlemen and knights, and as they had their own horses, of course they were numbered in the list.

Alonso de Avila was unprovided with a horse, so Cortés gave him the horse belonging to Ortiz el Musico and Bartolomé Garcia, "for neither of the two could ride." Juan Velazquez de Leon and Francisco de Morla were also mounted. Also Lares el Buen Ginete.[1] "I name him thus, for there was another Lares who also was a good man on a horse." Gonzalo Dominguez and Lares were splendid horsemen.[2]

[1] Lares, the good rider.

[2] *Extremados hombres de á caballo.*

Then came Moron el de Bayamo,[1] and Pedro Gonzalez, el de Truxillo. When all was ready, and after having heard Mass, the army drew out to an open plain not far from Cintla, and found the enemy arrayed.

"Now," says Diaz, "I will tell what happened in that battle, for it could really be called a battle, and was terrible."

[1] El de Bayamo—the man from Bayamo. This way of speaking of a man the Spaniards took from the Arabs. Amongst them a man's native place is always added to the name, as el Tangowi, the man from Tangier, el Zeiri, the man from Algiers, etc.

## CHAPTER III

It was terrible indeed, perhaps as terrible a fight as any of the innumerable battles that Bernal Diaz took part in, in his whole career.

The Indians of Tabasco were a warlike race, and some of them had even faced the Spaniards in a pitched battle; but still the artillery and the horses must have seemed to them things supernatural. The description of the battle is amongst the most vivid of the numerous descriptions Diaz has left of fights.

Although he has so often to describe combats with Indians, his memory was so keen that no two of his descriptions are alike, and every one contains some striking phrase, some curious incident or individual action, either of Indians or Spaniards, such as could only have been recalled by an actual combatant. The following shows him at his best :—

"I have told in what array and manner we set out, and how we met all the companies and squadrons of our enemies which had come forth to meet us, and all of them were crowned with feathers and had drums and little trumpets, and their faces painted yellow and black and white, and all bore great bows and arrows, lances and shields and swords, like our two-handed swords, and many slings and stones and throwing spears

hardened in the fire, and every man his jacket quilted with cotton.[1] So when they came up with us their squadrons were so large that they covered all the plain. They flew at us like hungry dogs, surrounding us on all sides, and threw so many darts and stones and shot so many arrows that at the first attack they wounded more than seventy of us, and with their lances, foot to foot with us, they did great damage to us, and a soldier was slain outright by an arrow that went into his ear—this man was called Saldana.

"We with our cannons and our guns and crossbows and with great sword-strokes did not waste our time. Little by little as they experienced the way our swords cut, they drew off a bit; but it was only so that they could shoot more safely at us, because our chief artillery-man, a man called Mesa, slew many of them with his guns, as there were many of them, and as they did not separate at all, he killed as many as he liked. But for all that, and despite of all the carnage that we made, nothing could make them run. I said to Captain Diego de Ordás, 'I think we ought to charge and get to hand-strokes with them, to make them feel the edges of our swords.'[2] . . . Ordás answered me that this was not good counsel, for to each one of us there were three hundred Indians, and that we could not face so great a multitude; but all the same, we went on facing them. Still we endeavoured to get close to them, to give them, as Ordás said, a bad time[3] with our swords."

[1] These jackets quilted with cotton could turn an arrow. The Spaniards themselves adopted them.

[2] This kind of counsel Bernal Diaz frequently gave throughout his future life, for amongst wounds and blows he was in his element.

[3] *Mal año de estocadas.*

This is the true spirit of all dealings with Indians; at least from the first time a white man met an Indian, down to the civilisation of the Putomayo tribes, it has been the universal use.

"I remember," Diaz says, "that when we fired the field-pieces the Indians gave shrill whistles and loud yells, throwing both dust and straw into the air, so that we should not see the damage we had done them. . . . Being thus occupied, we saw our horsemen coming into action; and as the big battalions (of the Indians) were so absorbed in fighting with us, they did not see them as they were coming from the rear; and as the ground was flat, the riders all good horsemen, and some of the horses swift and well-bitted, they had the opportunity to lance (the Indians) at their pleasure, a thing convenient at the time."

"Convenient at the time" is a phrase hard to better, and one that does not show the least trace of hypocrisy.

"The Indians thought the rider and the horse were the same body, as they had never seen a horse. After we had routed them . . . we all dismounted under a group of trees, and gave great thanks and praises both to God and to His Blessed Mother, raising our hands to heaven for giving us the day.

"Eight horses and five horsemen were wounded in this fight. As it was the day of Our Lady of March, we called the town, which afterwards was built there, Santa Maria de la Victoria, both because it was Our Lady's day and for the victory. This was the first fight that we had under Cortés in the New Spain. When the day was over, we bound our wounds up with any cloths

we had, for there was nothing else. The wounded horses we cured with grease from the dead Indians, and these were opened to get the grease from their insides. Then we went to see the dead . . . and found more than eight hundred . . . the most from sword wounds, and others killed by shots from the crossbows and field-pieces, and many lying here and there half dead.

"Where the horsemen had passed there were dead lying thick, and others wounded and complaining of their wounds. This battle lasted but an hour, and, as I said, we could do little till the horsemen came. We took five Indians, two of them captains. As it was late and we were tired after the fight, and had not eaten, we went back to our camp. Then we buried two of our men who died, one of a throat wound, the other of a hurt, just in the ear. The other wounded men we cured with fire,[1] the horses, as I said, with Indians' grease. Then we put out patrols and guards, and then had supper and reposed."

Few descriptions of a fight are truer than this of the obscure but sanguinary skirmish nearly four hundred years ago. There is no false atmosphere, and the account is in no wise coloured, and there is not an atom of the literary artifice by which in modern times men make the history of a fight so strangely different from what really happens in the field. Of course the narrator in this case was also a combatant himself, and nowadays such things are written from

[1] That is, by cauterisation, a practice that the Spaniards took (with many others) from the Moors.

the outside, rarely by soldiers or by men of action; for special correspondents are not men of action, but men spurred to activity by others, which is a different thing.

Diaz relates that they took grease from the dead Indians' bodies to cure their horses with, and says it naturally. He tells us nothing of how the Indians looked cut open with the flies buzzing round their intestines, or says that any of them moved, and that Fulano Sanchez, seeing they still lived, beat out their brains with the butt end of a crossbow, or with a heavy stone; for Diaz was an artist in his way, and knew when to let things alone. Anything vital he relates with circumstance; but things not vital and ideas which passed through his own mind he does not notice, and thus his picture is extraordinarily clear.

After the description of the fight occurs the well-known passage as to the appearance of St. James. Prescott and others have so handled it, in such a leaden way, with such a spirit of stern Protestantism, and have so much mistaken the true character of Diaz, and for that matter the character of all the conquerors,[1] that to translate it all and leave it without comment seems the best way in which to make it plain:—

"Here is where Francisco Lopez de Gómara says" (Diaz begins) "that Francisco de Morla came out upon a dappled grey before Cortés arrived with the

[1] The character of Diaz and that of so many of the Conquistadores and of Spaniards in general can best be expressed by the Scotch word "pawky," for Scots and Spaniards meet on many points.

horsemen, and they were the Holy Apostles, our Lords St. Peter and St. James.[1]

"I say that all our works and victories are through the hand of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and that in that battle there were so many Indians in comparison to us that they could have blinded us even by throwing earth at us, but that the great mercy of our Lord helped us in everything, and it may be that those of whom Gómara speaks were the glorious apostles St. Peter and St. James, and I as a sinner was not worthy to see it. What I saw then and knew was Francisco de Morla on a bay horse[2] who came up at the same time as Cortés, and it appears to me that now as I am writing, I see all the war with these eyes of a sinner, just as it was and just as everything occurred; and although I as an unworthy sinner was not worthy to see either of those glorious apostles, that then in our army there were about four hundred soldiers, and Cortés and many other gentlemen to speak of it and witness and swear to it, and that a church would have been built when the town was founded, and that the town itself would have been called La Villa de Santiago de la Victoria, or of San Pedro de la Victoria, but that it was named Santa Maria de la Victoria; and if it was as Gómara relates, we must have been bad Christians when Our Lord God sent us His holy Apostles not to have recognised the favour that He did us and

[1] This passage is, I think, corrupt, for from it it seems impossible to understand what Diaz means. Further on he makes himself clear enough.

[2] In the beginning of the passage Diaz said that the horse Francisco de Morla rode was grey. In Spanish "bay" and "grey" are words quite different from one another, and have no similarity in sound.

not to reverence each day that church; may it please God that it was just as the Chronicler relates, but till I read his Chronicle I never heard amongst the Conquerors that they heard a word about it."

This little passage portrays the character of Bernal Diaz almost as perfectly as it could have been set down by someone else looking at him from the outside. Perhaps it does so even more clearly, for it was written without the smallest outlook on the public, in just the spirit that he writes of everything he treats.

The well-known stratagem by which Cortés caused the horse to neigh and paw the ground and let the Indians think he did so out of fury against them Diaz has preserved for us, and it is his preservation of such trifling circumstances that makes the history of the Conquest of New Spain ten times more interesting to read about than that of Peru or any other country in the New World. It happened just after the fight which he describes so graphically, and during the negotiations for a peace which followed on it.

In these negotiations the Spaniards first heard the word Mexico, though they were ignorant of what it meant. It appears that as a peace-offering the Indian chiefs brought twenty Indian girls and with them the daughter of a chief, who, as it happened, played a considerable part in the taking of Mexico. Diaz tells of the circumstance with such simplicity and in such good faith, without an atom of hypocrisy, that the whole affair appears quite different to such occurrences when, for example, they have fallen to the lot of our own countrymen.

After enumerating all the presents that the chiefs brought to the peace conference, he says: "All this was nothing in comparison with twenty women, and amongst them one very excellent woman, who was called Doña Marina after she was baptized."

By the mouth[1] of Aguilar the interpreter, Cortés preached to the twenty Indian women. One sees him standing in his armour, a handsome figure with perhaps a discriminating eye for the points of the dusky catechumens as he discoursed upon our holy faith. The town, surrounded by its grove of palm trees, the wondering Indians, the expectant girls, the horses feeding fastened to their stake ropes or side-lined, so that they could not stray; and lastly, the four hundred Spanish soldiers, sun-burned, and with their wounds bound up in dirty rags, their armour rusted by the tropic rains—all must have formed a background fitted to make the gospel truths go home. They did so, and the twenty Indian maidens were all baptized, the Cacique's daughter being called Doña Marina; and as regards the rest, even Bernal Diaz is obliged to say, "As I cannot remember all their names, it is not worth the trouble to write some of them."

These were the first of all the Christian women in New Spain, he says with pride. So that the fledgling Christians might see at once that dogma and the practice of the faith is as distinct as Liberalism is from Liberality, Cortés gave one of them to every captain. Diaz does not inform us how the soldiers fared. Doña Marina he assigned

[1] "Por boca de ganso," as the Spanish saying has it.

to Don Alonso Hernandez Puertocarrero, who was "a gallant gentleman and cousin to the Count of Medellin."

When duty called this gentleman to Spain, Cortés himself took Doña Marina into his household and had a son by her called Don Martin Cortés, who afterwards became a *Commendador de Santiago.*

Whether for good or evil, that only time will show, the Spaniards never have observed the colour-line as have the Anglo-Saxons, and thus, when the first fury of the Conquest had spent itself, their treatment of the Indians almost from necessity was mild.

Cortés, who had a most persuasive tongue, drew to himself the chiefs, and got them all to declare themselves vassals of Charles v., a thing no doubt not half so difficult for them to do as it had been to see their idols broken and thrown down.

They were, as Diaz says, the first of all the natives of New Spain to swear allegiance to His Majesty. What the poor creatures thought that they were doing only Heaven knows!

As they sailed down the coast, Diaz relates with pride, "We showed Cortés" this or that river, and such and such a cape; for Diaz was proud of having been upon the coast in the two former expeditions, and gave himself, no doubt, considerable airs.

When they arrived at Alvarado's River (El Rio de Alvarado), Puertocarrero came to Cortés, and, slightly altering the words of the old ballad, said to him: "Look at France, O Montesinos, look at the city of Paris, look at the waters of the Douro where they go out into the

sea. I say, look at these rich lands, and learn to govern them."[1]

Cortés, who understood his meaning perfectly, and was an educated man, immediately rejoined: "May God give us as good fortune in our arms as had Roland; and for the rest, with you and the other gentlemen I will do well enough."

This curious little episode is worth remembering, for no doubt it strengthened the ambition of Cortés to free himself from the control of those who sent him out. Diaz remarks it fully; and though he was a partisan through thick and thin of his great leader in nearly all the actions of his life, this never blinds him to his moral faults. In fact, Diaz was obliged to stick to Cortés blindly, as only by so doing had he a chance of fortune, for all the followers of Velazquez seem to have been his enemies.

After this little excursion into Spanish ballads Diaz sits down to tell the world about Doña Marina, the Indian chieftainess. He says: "Before I take in hand to tell of Montezuma, I will tell all I know about Doña Marina, and how from her childhood she was the mistress both of vassals and of towns. Her father and her mother were caciques of a town called Painala. Her father died when she was young, and then her mother married a young chief." This wicked pair, quite in the manner of the brethren of Joseph, gave away the child, and said that she was dead; but she grew up (as always happens in such cases) a perfect paragon.

[1] "Cata Francia Montesinos, cata Paris la ciudad, cata las aguas de Duero, do van a dar á la mar. Yo digo que mireis las tierras ricas y sabeos bien gobernar."

Now turned a Christian and living with Puertocarrero, she did good service as interpreter. Then when he went to Spain she had a son by Cortés, and last of all married (in Latin,[1] as the saying is) one Juan Xaramillo, a gentleman. As she knew Mexican, she translated it into Tabascan, which Aguilar spoke well, and he again translated into Spanish for Cortés. Thus it took two interpreters before the Spaniards could understand the Mexicans that Montezuma sent.

Diaz says though Marina was a good wife to Xaramillo, it was her pride to serve Cortés in all things, and he declares she was, under God's will, an instrument towards the conquest of the land. The name Malinche, which the Mexicans applied to Cortés, was the Indian form of Doña Marina's name, and in thus speaking they referred to him as Malinche's husband, or her man. So in North Africa a European with a name hard to pronounce by Arabs is often known as the friend of so-and-so.

On Holy Thursday of the Supper of Our Lord in the year 1519, Diaz first heard of Montezuma and of Mexico. Diaz seems not to have been an officer at this time, for he says, "Between the soldiers we carried wood to make huts for the captains and for Cortés." Still his experience in the two former voyages he had made must have given him some consideration amongst his fellow-soldiers, and no doubt Cortés was often glad to consult him and to take his advice. Only Bernal Diaz could have written down with so much circumstance and yet so simply, the sort of military display that Cortés gave the

[1] *Casarse en Latin*=to be married in a church, as the service is in Latin.

officers of Montezuma. We see it all, put in his homely language, as clearly as we see the battles before Troy. Pedro de Alvarado on his chestnut mare (Diaz does not neglect to say she was well bitted) led the cavalry in a mimic charge. The cannons all were fired, and as it was a quiet day, "we could all follow how the balls went singing through the woods." This he relates in all simplicity, but at the same time does not forget to tell us that Montezuma's messengers made pictures of the scene, so that their master should see the cannons and the horses for himself.

It appears that in the army differences of rank were kept up pretty strictly, for whilst Cortés and all his captains feasted on the chickens, bread, and fruit the Indians brought them, the mere soldiers (Diaz was of the number, for he speaks in the plural) had to go fishing or to collect the shellfish on the beach for rations, or else to go without. One of the Indian chiefs from Mexico, it appears, was very like Cortés. The soldiers gave him the nickname of Cortés, and Diaz says it was amusing to hear him called so by all the soldiers in the camp.

The long delays and goings to and fro between the ambassadors of Montezuma and Cortés Diaz passes over rapidly, only saying, by the way, that the Indians soon tired of bringing in provisions, and all the army had to go fishing and collecting shellfish on the beach, even the officers.

As usual when there was nothing else to do, Cortés began to preach to the Indians upon the mysteries of the faith. In fact, this time he seems to have surpassed himself, for Diaz says that when an Indian asked why

the Spaniards knelt before a stick (meaning the Cross), Cortés held forth upon the Christian religion in a way few theologians could have equalled, and fewer still excelled.

Such gifts are not the heritage of every general, and possibly have never been recorded of any other soldier with the exception of the Lord Protector, who certainly had a fine gift of prayer. The sermon had for its chief point, in addition to the explanation of the dogmas of the faith, an exhortation to destroy the idols, and in particular that of Huichilobos, the God of War, in whose honour both youths and maidens were slaughtered every day.

Diaz, as it happened, was on outpost duty on some sand-hills with others of his friends. Along the edge of these low sand-hills they saw three Indians coming up between them and the beach. These Indians met them with their faces wreathed in smiles, an unusual experience at the time. They asked to be led up to the encampment, and Diaz, telling his fellow-soldiers to remain, offered to take them there himself. He says a little sadly, but still with the pride of a man who once had been an athlete,[1] "In those days my feet did not weigh quite as heavy as they do now that I am old."

He led the Indians to Cortés, and after an examination of them through the two interpreters, Cortés found out for the first time that Montezuma had his enemies. This naturally made him more anxious than before, to go to Mexico.

The Indian envoys had great holes bored in their lips,

[1] He was renowned as a good runner and as a tireless man upon the march.

and in the holes were set, as it were, round stone discs of a blue colour, though some of them wore ornaments[1] of gold. They also wore the same discs in their ears, and all their dresses and accoutrements differed entirely from those of the men sent by Montezuma; they also differed in their speech.

By this time the Spaniards were in a bad way. The Indians did not bring them any food, and that which they had brought from Cuba with them was nearly finished, and what remained was sour and worm-eaten. Thirty or forty soldiers had been killed or died of wounds they had received, and the followers of Velazquez, most of whom were men of property, were dying to return. Besides, as Montezuma had sent rich presents, amongst which figured a sun made of gold and a great silver moon, they said, with a fine show of reason, that it was time to go to Cuba and show Velazquez the treasure they had found.

Diaz shows plainly that his sympathies were with his general, for he applauds the attitude he took, which was that it would be a weak thing to return to Cuba and not see Mexico.

In the election of Cortés as Captain-General and Chief Judge of the newly conquered land, Bernal Diaz seems to have played a not inconsiderable part. His description of the actual ceremony is in his best vein: "This, Cortés accepted, though he made us beg him to accept: as the proverb says, 'You ask me, but I am willing all the time.' The worst of the whole business was (he says) that we gave him (Cortés) the fifth part of

[1] These lip discs were what we know in South America as "Bodoques," and are, I think, peculiar to the Indian tribes of that continent.

the gold which was remaining after having taken out the Royal fifth."

It is interesting to read that when the town of Vera Cruz was first laid out, a whipping-post was set up in the *plaza*, and a sufficient gallows just outside the town. These outward visible signs of civilisation must have seemed poor enough to Indians who sacrificed victims to their gods wholesale; but still they were enough to give that touch as of a common nature that no doubt made them feel akin to those who conquered them. It is at this juncture that Bernal Diaz first tells us anything about Gonzalo de Sandoval. This captain, the owner of the good horse Motilla, was then quite a young man, and Diaz says, on account of his youth, he was not so much considered at the time, but subsequently became second to Cortés alone, and that the Emperor (Charles v.) himself knew all about him and his deeds.

After Cortés had been raised to the governorship, and Pedro de Alvarado sent into the country to explore and bring back provisions (for in the camp the soldiers passed extremity of hunger), Diaz was one of those who remained to guard Cortés from any attack that might be made on him from the discontented faction that still wished to return to Cuba and not push farther on into the land.

This was most natural, for amongst these men were many kinsmen of Velazquez, and moreover, many of them were rich. The immediate followers of Cortés were generally poor, and amongst these Diaz was one of the poorest, and therefore willing to set his life on any chance, to end or better it. Adventures were his

daily bread, for travelling, as he says, "coastwise along the coast," they killed a great fish, and no doubt feasted on it.

When the fleet arrived at the entrance to a river (where, as he says, now stands the town of Vera Cruz), it was in flood. The soldiers crossed it in some canoes they found, "and I swam over by myself."

The army marched to the town of Cempoal, of which place the Cacique was so fat and heavy that he could not advance to welcome them. Diaz relates that some scouts they had sent out, returned to say the town had walls of silver, which so impressed them that they sent a man full speed back to the camp to tell Cortés. It turned out afterwards that the walls were made of fine white plaster that glittered in the sun.

Diaz remarks, "We laughed consumedly, both at their madness and their silver," and he goes on to say that from that day it was a saying with the soldiers that all that looked a little white seemed silver to the scout. After the "Cacique Gordo" (for that was the name the soldiers gave the chief) had received Cortés and feasted all the soldiers upon maize-bread and plums, Cortés made them an after-dinner speech.

This time he did not touch upon religious matters; but quite in Don Quixote's vein announced that the Emperor had sent him to undo wrongs and punish evil-doers. El Cacique Gordo, seeing his chance, immediately began to complain of Montezuma, and Cortés, having listened carefully, assured him of his distinguished consideration and offered him his aid. The Chief was quite delighted, and Diaz tells without a smile that he sent four hundred carriers to carry all the baggage of

the host. "Before this," Bernal Diaz says, "we had to carry our own knapsacks and everything we had."

Thus was the alliance made between the Spaniards and the men of Cempoal which gave them that town for a base, and in the long-run brought Montezuma's empire to the ground.

## CHAPTER IV

THE Spaniards now had got a footing in the land, and at once set out for the interior.

Diaz, always upon the look-out as it were instinctively for details of a homely kind, tells us how Captain Alonso de Avila,[1] being a proud and an ill-natured man, seeing a soldier, Hernando Alonso de Villanueva, marching out of array, gave him a lance thrust in the arm which left him lame for life. Diaz does not comment specially upon this captain's brutality, but informs us that thereafter the poor soldier received the nickname of "Manquedio," and then says, "People will say that I am always getting out of line by telling these old tales." Still, one is glad he is so often out of line, and that there is no Alonso de Avila to prick him with his lance; for his old tales are sidelights upon men and manners of those times, and give an insight into the daily life of a Spanish regiment on the march better than pages about tactics or on strategy.

When the army got to a town called Quiavistlan, they found there a cacique of such monstrous bulk that Diaz never mentions him but as "El Cacique Gordo," and tells us he was carried in a litter, being too fat to walk. This chief complained so bitterly of Montezuma and his tyranny "that Cortés and all of us almost

[1] "Era soberbio y de mala condicion."

began to weep." Diaz, of course, may have been really moved, being as he was a simple-minded man; but the tears of Cortés cannot have taken very many handkerchiefs to dry them up, for the Chief's lamentations were his opportunity.

All turned out luckily, for Cortés. During the interview news was brought to El Cacique Gordo that five of Montezuma's tax-gatherers had just arrived, and wished to speak to him. These tax-gatherers asked for twenty Indians to sacrifice to their god Huichilobos, a deity whom Diaz never mentions but with horror and disgust, having seen so many of his fellow-soldiers dragged off for sacrifice, and himself having escaped the same fate by a miracle.

Cortés ordered the Indians to seize and throw these tax-gatherers into prison. This was an undertaking that the Indians of the fat chief looked on as sacrilege. However, they were forced to do it.

The Indians answered that the Spaniards were "Teules," a word Diaz explains as "gods," but adds, a little dubiously, "or devils,"[1] which seems to show that in all theologies men have always been inclined to hedge.

The die being now cast, the fat Cacique entered into an alliance with Cortés against Montezuma. It is difficult to divine what Diaz thought of the position as a whole. Probably he, after the fashion of many men, strong conservatives at home, thought himself a born reformer abroad.

The description of the building of the town of Vera Cruz is in the writer's most graphic vein. "After we

[1] "Nos llamaron Teules, que es como he dicho, Dioses ó Demonios."

had made the alliance," he says, "we thought fit to build a town. Cortés began himself, the first to carry earth on his shoulders, and stone, and to dig foundations with all his captains and his soldiers . . . and we kept at it continually so as to finish quickly, some working at the foundations, others at the walls, others in bringing water, others at the limekilns, making bricks and tiles; some going out to search for provisions, others for wood; the smiths set about making nails, for we had smiths amongst us; and in this manner we worked on without once stopping from the first to the last."

It must have been a wonderful and a primitive scene to see the Spanish soldiers, headed by their leader, all working against time, somewhat in the style of those who built the Tower of Babel. Situated as the Spaniards were, cut off from any help, and in the middle of a thickly populated land, their chance of success must have appeared almost as remote as that of those who raised the Tower.

Diaz, who records everything that he recollected (and his memory never was at fault), says that when the town was finished Cortés lost his horse, and that he bought, "or they gave him another, called 'El Arriero.'"

This horse was "a dark chestnut, and had belonged to Ortiz the musician, and one Bartolomé Garcia el Minero,[1] and was one of the best horses in the host."

All the book is a gallery of descriptions of soldiers and of people Diaz had known during the Conquest. The resolve of Cortés to send a soldier with the forces of the fat Cacique against the Culua Indians gives him

[1] "Un Bartolomé Garcia el Minero." Diaz remembered even to the man's nickname. Garcia had probably been a miner.

a good chance. The man chosen by Cortés was one Heredia, an old man, and a native of Biscay, and had a fierce look. "His beard was long, and he had several scars upon his face; only one eye, and rather lame of a leg, and was a musketeer."

No one but Diaz would have set such little details down. The only historian of the Conquest of the Indians who in the least approaches him is the Inca Garcilasso de la Vega, and he, being a man of education, does not sow details quite so plentifully throughout his narrative.

The instructions that Cortés gave to this Biscayan of the fierce face and the lame leg were curious enough, and luckily Diaz was there to treasure them up and to preserve them for us. He said: "Go with these chiefs to the river, and when you have arrived, make as if you wished to stop to drink and wash your hands, then fire a shot out of your gun, and I will send for you; and this I do that they may think we are gods . . . and as you are so ugly, they will take you for an idol."

This implies that Cortés, amongst his other qualities, had the gift of humour. It is a pity that it did not stop him preaching so much, both in and out of season.

Diaz goes on to say: "Heredia did as he was told, for he was a man who had been a soldier in Italy. . . . I write this down as something laughable, and that it may be seen what tricks Cortés had at command." All through his history Diaz never fails to show himself impressed with the quickness of wit shown by his general. His bravery he seems to have taken as a matter of course, but his diplomacy as something quite

out of the ordinary way. Perhaps he did so because courage was common to all the conquerors; but as the Castilian mind usually works rather slowly, his general's quick southern wit seemed something wonderful.

It is curious also to observe how much influenced he was by every action of Cortés', for when he tells how Cortés had to force the friendly Indians to give up their plunder (for above all things it was necessary at that time that the Spaniards should be held as just men by their allies), he touches on the story of a Spanish soldier who had stolen two fowls.

This man, one[1] Mora of Ciudad-Rodrigo, was caught by Cortés himself, who straightway calling for a rope, had him strung up. He would have died had not Pedro de Alvarado cut the rope with his sword and let the poor man fall, half choked.

"I have allowed myself to notice this," says Diaz, "to show my careful readers[2] in what an exemplary way Cortés proceeded on this occasion. . . . This soldier died afterwards in a war in the province of Guatimala[3] . . . but let us go back to our tale." He does not comment adversely upon his general's severity, possibly because to him life was of less account than property; though afterwards, when he thought Cortés took an undue share of Montezuma's treasure for himself, he blames him strongly. Diaz was above all things, in his quality of a Castilian, a man of discipline, and all offences against military law were to him sins against

[1] Fulano (So-and-so) Mora de Ciudad-Rodrigo.

[2] *Curiosos lectores.*

[3] Diaz usually spells Guatemala Guatimala.

the Holy Ghost. On no occasion does he ever let his pen run away with his judgment—that is, knowingly—as is to be seen in the last sentences of the chapter in which he tells the episode of Mora and the fowls.

"This expedition of Cingapacinga was the first that Cortés undertook in New Spain, and it was very profitable, and not, as the chronicler Gómara says, alleging that we killed and took and utterly destroyed thousands of people. Let, therefore, the careful reader who reads this . . . not be taken in by Gómara's good style."

This matter of "good style," a thing of small account when all is said and done, was ever in his mind, for he had no idea that the first essential of a good stylist is to be natural, and that his own style had a peculiar charm in its simplicity.

Just at this time occurred the first movement against the authority of Cortés. This eventually caused his disgrace after so many episodes in which his enemies put forth all the accustomed wiles and treacheries that mediocre men have in all times availed themselves of to destroy the great.

All appeared to be going well. Eight Indian girls had just been received into the Christian Church. One of them, the niece of the fat cacique, who was very ugly, was led up by the hand and given to Cortés. Diaz says that Cortés received her favourably,[1] and we know that he was a good diplomatist. Still the man who, as Diaz says, was in his youth "a devil amongst the women,"[2] was married to a handsome wife, and had

[1] *Con buen semblante.*

[2] So I take leave to translate *algo travieso sobre mujeres.*

much experience in matters feminine, must have made what is called in Spanish "the rabbit's laugh" [1] when he received the ugly Indian's hand.

Let us pass from this, as Diaz might have said. The next to receive the saving waters was the daughter of a chief, and she was given the name of Doña Francisca, and was "very pretty for an Indian." Cortés gave her to Alonso Hernandez Puertocarrero, who already had another mistress, Doña Marina. "Of the other six," says Diaz, "I cannot recall the names, but I know that Cortés gave them out to the soldiers." It seems a little strange that Cortés and the other conquerers should have been so earnest on the subject of the Christian faith, and should have done so little in their own persons to show the Indians how a Christian ought to live.

These damsels having been made inheritors of the kingdom of heaven before they were shared amongst the soldiers, all seemed as merry as a marriage bell. However, the partisans of Velazquez were always ready to stir up strife. On their part it was natural enough that they should wish to return home to Cuba, as they had joined the expedition partly under false pretences, and most of them were men of property.

Bernal Diaz supported Cortés through thick and thin, in his desire to see the adventure through and push on instantly to Mexico.

"The most of us," he says, "said to Cortés, before starting for Mexico, that we should send and kiss His Majesty's [2] feet and tell him everything that had occurred since we set out from Cuba." They also agreed to send

[1] *La risa del conejo.*

[2] The Emperor Charles V.

the Emperor all the gold that Montezuma had sent them by the hands of his ambassadors.

Diaz records with pride that he was one of those who signed the document that Cortés and all his soldiers sent to the Emperor by the hands of Puertocarrero and Francisco de Montejo, setting forth all that they had done.

Though Diaz speaks with pride of the terms in the letter, commending amongst other things in it the praise of Doña Marina, whom he refers to as a chief, "and for an Indian a person of much value,"[1] he does not omit to criticise Cortés most roundly once or twice.

In the letter he says they asked that the Emperor would graciously give the governorship to Cortés, "and we praised him so much, for a loyal servant, that we almost put him in the clouds."[2]

Diaz, however, speaks without book on this occasion, for he expressly said "we" (that is, the soldiers) "never saw the letter." He continues: "As we understood, he made no mention in his letter either of Hernandez de Cordova or of Grijalva, but attributed to himself alone the honour and glory of it all." This was the kind of thing that excited Bernal's ire, for he seems to have been a true Castilian of his time in regard to glory. He cheerfully endured short commons and hard blows, illness and wounds, even being defrauded of his due share of the plunder; but touch what he considered the honour due to him, and he was up in arms. These are the occasions when he really criticises Cortés almost

[1] *Una cacica, para India de mucho ser.*

[2] *Hasta ponello en las nubes.* To put this phrase into modern English would entirely destroy its picturesqueness, so I translate it word for word.

with acrimony, though it does not last long; his natural good-humour and his admiration for his chief soon get the upper hand. For all that, he is justly indignant when he recounts the unjust treatment that the envoys received at the hands of Fonseca, Bishop of Burgos and President of the Council of the Indies at the time.

It seems as incredible to us as it seemed to Bernal Diaz that the envoys of a man such as was Cortés, coming to give an empire to Charles v. far larger than the territories he then ruled over, should have been received with contumely. Fonseca was not a man such as the Spaniards say "is only fit for God," but on the contrary a statesman, ambitious, though short-sighted, as seems to be the fate of statesmen in every state throughout the history of the world.

The Governor of Cuba was of course one of his creatures, and possibly the natural repulsion that mediocrity feels towards genius stopped the good Bishop from appreciating Cortés and all that he had done. However, Charles v., although he too in after times was jealous of the military renown of his great subject, yet was not so foolish when at last he heard the news, as not to welcome both the messengers.

Diaz says: "God willed it that His Majesty should know; and when he saw and heard, so great was the joy he showed that Dukes, Marquesses, Counts, and other gentlemen who were at his Royal Court, for several days did nothing but talk about Cortés and about all of us who had helped him in his Conquests and sent them such riches home."

Bernal, who was as simple as a child, and though impossible to drive (as are most Spaniards) might have

been led all round the world upon a thread of silk, shows himself greatly delighted at what happened at the Court. No conqueror of the New World, with the possible exception (and even that remains unproved) of Gonzalo Pizarro, ever seems to have thought of treason to his lord. Nothing would have been easier for Cortés than to have made himself the King of Mexico.

His followers all had confidence in his great powers. The native Mexicans almost feared him as a god, and men such as were Bernal Diaz, Puertocarrero, Sandoval, and Alvarado, might have been attached to him by gifts of great estates and have been the pillars of his throne.

Nothing was further from his mind, and in spite of the bad treatment he received from men far his inferior in every way, his loyalty remained unwavering to the end.

Throughout the Conquest Cortés had to face treason from his own men. The leaven of the followers of Velazquez always fermented and several times broke out. It is clear from Bernal Diaz that there was a party in his army who looked upon the march to Mexico as madness and was pining to go home. Just at this juncture, on the eve of marching, some sailors plotted to steal a ship. At the last moment one of them confessed, and Cortés found himself obliged to strike a blow, or all his expedition would have failed.

He struck to such good purpose that Bernal Diaz leaves us in doubt whether he approved of it or not. Pedro Escudero and Juan Cermeño were sentenced to be hanged, and the pilot Gonzalo de Umbria to have his toes cut off. Each sailor had two hundred lashes

in the good old style, and Father Juan Diaz, if he had not been a priest, would have been flogged too, but he got off with a fright.

"I remember," says Bernal, "that when Cortés signed that sentence, he said with a deep sigh, 'Who would not like not to be able to write, so that he could not sign the death-warrant of a man?'"

This was a little too much even for his faithful follower, for he observes as pawkily as if he had been born a Scot: "It appears to me that this saying is common to all judges who sentence men to death." He adds, in a way that sets one wondering what he really thought about it all, "They took it (the custom) from that cruel Nero who in his youth had given signs of a good emperor."

As soon as the sentence was executed, Cortés threw himself on his horse and set off to Cempoal, *á mata caballo*—that is, at a break-neck speed; for he must have been aware that in immediate action lay his only chance of escaping much discontent at his severity amongst his soldiers. Bernal Diaz held that it is best to prepare a bridge for a flying enemy, and always opposed punishing those who wished to return to Cuba and their homes.

Had he been listened to, Cortés would have been saved many troubles and much severity during his subsequent career. When he relates the historic scuttling of the ships, Diaz says in his simple way, "We counselled him that he should leave no ship in any port, but scuttle all of them." Then innocently enough he adds: "As I saw and understood, this counsel to scuttle all the ships which we proposed to him, Cortés himself had

already determined on, but he wished it to appear to come from us."

Then his usual penetration leaves him, for he says: "This he did so that if anyone should have asked for payment of the ships, that as it was done under our advice we all should have to pay."

This is so unlike the character of Cortés that it would seem Diaz was but repeating some gossip of the camp. In no part of his history does he show himself more indignant with the arm-chair historians of the Conquest than in this matter of the scuttling of the ships. "Here," he says, "is where Gómara says that Cortés gave the order for the scuttling of the ships," and he says that Cortés never published to the soldiers that he was going to seek the great Montezuma in Mexico. "What kind of people are we Spaniards," he indignantly asks, "and have we ever refused to go ahead?" In truth, no one can say the Spaniards ever hung back when fighting was to be done.

All was now ready for the march on Mexico, and Cortés and his men were starting upon one of the greatest adventures in which a general ever has embarked. Prince Charlie in the '45, or Xenophon when he assumed the command of the ten thousand Greeks, or Garibaldi when he set out from Genoa to conquer Italy with but a thousand men recruited from the four quarters of the world, alone have undertaken quests as dangerous. Whether Bernal really remembered the speech he puts into his leader's mouth upon the eventful morning when they set out for the great Tenochtitlan,[1] whether he had some notes he took

[1] Aztec name of Mexico.

at various times, or whether he invented the whole thing, no one can say with any certainty. At any rate, just as does Barbour in the speech he puts into the mouth of Bruce at Bannockburn, so does Bernal put a first-rate and enthusiastic discourse into that of Cortés.

He stood out like St. Paul upon the Areopagus, and beckoning with his hand, "asked us to listen to him." "We knew," he said, "the kind of expedition on which we were about to start, and with the help of our Lord Jesus Christ[1] we shall win every battle and encounter. . . ."

"That we had no other help, nor could look for any other aid, but from God . . . and after that many examples of the Roman's heroic deeds."

These must have sounded very fine, couched in sonorous Castilian; and as the majority of those who listened to him probably heard the Roman names for the first time in their lives, the effect upon them must have been similar to that which an orator who quoted Greek or Latin would make at Westminster to-day.

All the soldiers answered him with one accord, says Diaz, that they were ready to accompany him, and that they had crossed the Rubicon.

The historical allusions in the general's speech appear to have imparted quite a classical flavour to the reply made by the soldiery. Perhaps this flavour was the effect of reading in after years in the quiet of Guatemala long after Mexico was won.

A vessel having appeared off the coast, Cortés went

[1] One fails to recognise the Saviour as the God of Battles, but still no doubt His name stirred pious soldiery to great enthusiasm.

off to find out what she was, leaving in charge Pedro de Alvarado and Gonzalo de Sandoval, a young and untried man, destined to become one of the first figures in the Conquest, and Bernal's lifelong friend.

Having consulted with the fat Cacique which way to take, and having chosen that which led by Tlascala (a lucky thing for the Spaniards, for without the help of the men of Tlascala they could have done nothing), they set out on their way.

The country rises gradually, and by degrees leaves the mosquito-haunted, low-lying country of the coast, passing thick palm groves, and then gradually enters hilly country, broken and desolate. Through it the Spaniards must have travelled, at first toiling amongst the swamps, and then struggling along the ever-mounting paths.

Their baggage was carried on the backs of porters whom the fat Cacique had lent; but, as Diaz says, "we poor soldiers had no necessity of any of them." He gives one of his striking pictures of what the soldiers must have looked like on the march—not that he intends it for a picture, but sets it down just as it came into his mind. In fact, the early scenes of his adventures seem to have been ever present to his memory.

He tells us so in the phrase, "Now as I write, everything rises before my eyes, as if it only happened yesterday."[1] However, he has no need to tell us this, for every word he writes proves it most absolutely.

"We had," he says, "nothing at all at that time to carry, for, as to our arms, as lances, guns, crossbows,

[1] *Agora que lo estory escriviendo se me representa todo delante de mis ojos como si ayer fuera cuando esto pasó.*

and bucklers, we bore them marching and we slept with them and with our *alpargates*,[1] for we were shod with *alpargates*, and we were always ready for the fight."

So much accustomed to sleeping prepared for all eventualities did Diaz become that even in his old age he never could take kindly to a bed, but slept upon a mat. So, in years gone by I have known cattlemen in both Americas who, when they came to town, after having put up at the best hotel the place afforded, could never sleep in beds; but had either to lie down on the floor, or go out and sleep in the corral.

The chronicle goes on to tell of the first town they came to on their march, which was called Cocotlan, but which was renamed Castelblanco, because some Portuguese soldiers said it reminded them of the town so called in Portugal, and all that happened to them there.

The chief, one Olintecle, came out to meet and welcome them. It happened that a greyhound which belonged to a soldier, Francisco de Lugo, had barked all night, and Olintecle was concerned to know what kind of beast it was and why it made that noise. Also he asked if it was one of "those animals we had to kill the Indians with." A pathetic question, and one that showed the Indians had already understood that the Christian faith only (like Latin[2]) enters in with blood.

Diaz says they answered that it was indeed a beast

[1] *Alpargates*, in French *espadrilles*—that is, canvas shoes with hemp soles. They are still much worn by Spanish soldiers on the march. They are of Basque origin. The word is usually written *alpargatas*.

[2] The Spanish proverb has it that "El Latin con sangre entra," meaning that schoolboys have to be flogged to learn it. One is glad to know that in Cocotlan blood did not mingle with the sacrifice after the Mass.

they had with them to kill anyone who molested them. Then the poor Indians, after their minds had been made uneasy by the answer and the baying of the dog, asked "What the cannons were and what we did with them?"

The chance was far too good to lose, "so they replied that we put great stones in them with which to slay anyone we liked." It is not to be forgotten that Cortés had not neglected his opportunity to preach to them beforehand on the Christian faith, with somewhat, one may suppose, of peace on earth and goodwill to men in his prelection, so the answer as to the dog and cannons does not seem apposite, although it was the truth.

They told the Indians that the horses ran like deer and that with them they could catch anyone who fled. All these things taken into consideration, it is not wonderful that the poor devils thought the Spaniards were all gods, for the very essence of a god is surely that he can give or take away your life.

Diaz is again at pains to explain that the word *Teule* meant either a devil or a god; but here he qualifies, saying, "I have already said" (here he forgets his words) "that their idols, or their gods, or bad things, they called *Teules*." Into which category the Spaniards fell the reader can decide.

In Cocotlan they were advised still to keep on by the road of Tlascala and to avoid Cholula, which was in the hands of Montezuma and his chiefs. So they set out to Xalacingo, sending on two messengers to the chiefs of Tlascala with a letter and a Flemish velvet hat. The Indians, though they could not read, instantly understood by the marks on the paper that it contained a

message,[1] although the marks were different to their own. Everything hitherto had pointed to a friendly meeting, for Tlascala was at feud with Mexico.

However, the messengers sent by Cortés were thrown into prison, from which they escaped with difficulty, and returned thoroughly frightened, saying that in Tlascala they had been told that they were ready to fight the *Teules* to see whether they were as valiant as had been reported, and if they beat them they would feast upon their flesh.

[1] *Conocerian que era de mensageria.*

## CHAPTER V

As it was evident that the Tlascalans intended to oppose their onward march, the Spaniards now prepared for war. Their situation was most difficult. Far from their base in Cempoal they found themselves opposed, for the first time since they had landed, to a large force of men who had a sort of discipline.

Diaz, by virtue of the experience he had acquired in his two former expeditions, no doubt had much to say as to the best way to repel the Indians' attacks. "Upon the march," he says, "we talked about the tactics to pursue." It appears that the method which found most favour with the cavalry was to attack in threes, and riding at three-quarter speed. The lances, all agreed, should be held short and high, so as to wound the Indians in the face, and avoid the risk of having them snatched out of their hands.

The cavalry was few in number, hardly exceeding twenty horsemen, so that the loss of a few lances would have been a serious thing. They agreed the instant that they speared a man to spur their horses and either extricate the lance or drag the Indian's[1] body after them. Next day they attacked the Tlascaltecans, losing five

[1] What they intended to do, and did, can be seen at any exhibition of tent-pegging, when the horseman, after extracting the peg, turns his wrist, and lets the lance and peg trail for an instant behind his horse.

horses and several of their men. Bernal, who was in the thick of the fight, says : " That night we slept near to a stream, and with the grease of a fat Indian whom we had killed there, being opened, we dressed our wounds, for oil there was none ; and we supped well on certain little dogs that they bred there."

The surgery was rough, but no doubt quite effectual, and their stomachs must have been good to be able to fall to upon the little dogs after the opening up of the fat Indian. One wishes now and then that we could get details of contemporary campaigns set down so simply and so truthfully.

What happens nowadays is that historians of culture usually are blinded by party politics, by religion, or by patriotic bias, whilst narratives of soldiers such as was Bernal Diaz, written with an eye upon the public, are evidently cooked for our consumption and usually strain every nerve to show a sense of humour and to make groundlings laugh.

Bernal wrote unaffectedly, a thing almost impossible to find in English writers ; and though his history had a purpose, he knew it would be read *in extenso* as a book and not in slices in a newspaper. Hence his simplicity and striving after truth.

As the Spaniards had taken several prisoners, they sent back one of them to ask the enemy for peace. Cortés enjoined a notary, one Diego Godoy, to set down upon paper that he had asked for peace, in case, as Bernal Diaz says, " that at some time we might be taken to task about the slaughter and the damage we had done."

He need scarcely have troubled much about the

matter, for no one cared how many Indians he killed, any more than they would have cared had it been to-day. All was of no avail, and so Cortés cried, "Santiago, and set upon them," and "we killed and wounded many of them and several of their chiefs."

Santiago must have felt that it was quite like old times and that the Moorish wars had begun again when he heard the familiar cry.[1]

However, he was upon the watch, for "in those battles they surrounded us on every side . . . and our lives were in great peril, for their warriors were so numerous that they might have blinded us by throwing earth upon us had not the great mercy of the Lord helped us and guarded us."

Theologians should note that the "great mercy of the Lord" was pleased to manifest itself on this occasion on the wrong side, and against men striving to defend their native land from invasion. It walked in the mysterious way that it not infrequently affects, when it has wonders to perform. In this fight the Indians killed a good mare that belonged to Pedro de Morón, and having cut off her head sent it round their towns to show that she was mortal.

Her shoes they offered to one of their idols. Pedro de Morón died three days afterwards of his wounds; but though he was a brave soldier and a good rider,[2] his death was not so great a loss to the Spaniards under the circumstances as that of the good mare.

At this juncture Cortés gave evidence of his powers

[1] *Santiago y cierra España* (St. James and close up Spain) was the battle-cry of the Spaniards against the Moors.

[2] *Era muy buen ginete.*

as a leader and as a diplomat, by refusing to remain idle in camp lest the Indians should think the Spaniards could be tired. Then when he had taken some prisoners, he let them go without harming them. In fact, the war with the Tlascalans had been a great surprise to him, for as they were the enemies of Montezuma of Mexico, he had expected their help.

All was of no avail, and the Tlascalans prepared a great army, numbering, as Diaz says, fifty thousand. It may be that he only intends to convey the idea of number, and attaches no particular meaning to fifty thousand, for it is a little difficult to see from where such a host could have been got together at such short notice.

However, I remember once being asked in the Atlas how many men rode out after Queen Victoria's carriage. I answered a "great many," and found this did not at all satisfy my questioner. So after consideration I told him, as far as I could judge, that about ten thousand men usually turned out in fine weather. This contented him, and he answered, "Ten thousand—I thought perhaps there had been twenty thousand." To which I answered, "Seldom so many as that."

Diaz in one of his delightfully human passages, so different from a modern man writing of a similar position, says: "When we saw that, (the fifty thousand warriors), as we were men, and consequently feared death, many of us, even the most of us"—I fancy that a Castilian soldier from Medina was amongst them—"confessed ourselves to the Mercenarian Father, and with a priest, Juan Diaz, and all night long we listened to the penitential psalms and prayed to God that He would save us

from defeat. And in that way we passed the night, and of the battle that we had next day I will now tell."

So he concludes his chapter, and launches in the next into an animated description of the fight and of the victory that they gained owing to "the great mercy of God."

In this battle, in which more than sixty soldiers and all the horses were wounded, Diaz received two wounds. One was from a stone, in the head, the other from an arrow, in the thigh. However, "they were not enough either to leave off fighting or mounting guard for, or from helping our soldiers."

Diaz always makes light of all his wounds when they were not serious, and never exaggerates their gravity even when they were. In this he demonstrates the sobriety of the Castilian character, so orderly and measured in all its turns and such an enemy of all extremes. Most of the conquerors were either Andalusians or Estremenians and were of a different stamp, brave and active and enterprising, but prone to see things either too rosy or too black. The battle really broke the spirit of the Tlascaltecans,[1] and paved the way for peace.

"Then we went back to camp very contentedly, and giving many thanks to God, we buried those who were slain in one of those houses that they had underground, that the Indians should not see that we were mortals, but *Teules* as they called us; and we threw much earth upon the house so that the bodies should not smell, and

[1] Tlascala being the name of the town, the inhabitants can be called either Tlascalans or Tlascaltecans, according as we follow English or Spanish forms of speech.

we dressed all the wounded men with the grease of that Indian[1] of which I have already told. Oh, what bad luck we had! for there was neither oil nor salt with which to dress our wounds. Another lack we had, and a great one—that is, clothes with which to wrap ourselves; for from the snowy sierra there came a bitter wind which made us shiver (though we kept up our spirits always), for lances, guns, and crossbows covered us but scantily."

In reading all the negotiations that took place between the Spaniards and the Indians one is struck by the common sense and practicalness of the so-called savages. Modern investigations have shown plainly enough that the quality of the brains of all the various races of mankind is almost equal, and thus destroyed all the old-fashioned, unscientific theories as to the existence of one or two races designed by Providence to bear the intellectual burden of the rest.

The Tlascalans having summoned a great council of their nation, came to the conclusion, Diaz tells us, "that we were men of bone and flesh, and that we ate chickens and dogs and bread and fruit when we could get it, and that we did not eat the bodies of the Indians nor the hearts of those we killed."

Still they had one little bit of superstition to make them equal to the Spaniards on all points, for, having laid down the propositions stated above, they came to the conclusion that the only time to attack the *Teules* was at night.

It appeared rational to them—and who are we to throw stones at the credulity of anyone?—that night took

[1] This was the fat Indian they had so providentially killed in the last fight.

away the Spaniards' strength, for they were children of the sun.

Unluckily for them, the next night happened to be bright, and as the ground was flat, the Spanish horsemen, hearing their approach, sallied out and slaughtered many of them and put the rest to flight.

The continual fighting had begun to dishearten the Spanish soldiers. Cortés was ill with ague, many were wounded, and fifty-five men had been killed or had died of cold and of fatigue. A spirit of discouragement ran through the camp, and they began to think that they would all be killed; and as to reaching Mexico, "we held it for a joke, and we said to each other that when the men of Tlascala had brought us to such a pass . . . that when we found ourselves at war with the great forces of Montezuma, what was it we could do?"

The discouragement seems to have lasted but a little while, for soon "we all told Cortés to take good care of himself; that we were there, and with the help of God, as we had escaped from so many dangerous fights, that our Lord must be going to save us for some good end."

So they once more sent fresh messengers to sue for peace. Doña Marina, though a new Christian and a woman, behaved so bravely through this trying time that Diaz says: "Even though she heard every day that they were going to kill us and eat our flesh, although she had seen us so hard pressed in the past battles and now most of us sick and wounded, we never saw weakness in her, but greater strength than a woman generally has."

As Bernal Diaz might have said to Doña Marina,

after God they owed the conquest to her. Still, as far as I know, no one can tell where she is buried, and only the volcano[1] yet preserves her name amongst the Mexicans.

She was of course a traitor to her countrymen, having lost the whole world—that is, the whole of her world—for the love of Cortés, and appears to have been quite happy in her loss—or gain, according to the way in which one looks upon such things.

By this time the Tlascalans had had almost enough of fighting, and though a chief, whom Diaz calls "Capitan Xicotenga el Mozo" (that is, the young Captain Xicotenga) still wished to try again, saying that as they had slain a horse and many Spaniards, there was still a chance to win, the rest, led by his father, determined to make peace.

During the negotiations for peace with the Tlascalans the partisans of Velazquez began to sow trouble in the camp. Diaz puts their complaints into the mouth of one he calls a good speaker.[2] The scuttling of the ships seems to have been a hard doctrine even for Bernal to swallow, for he makes the good speaker say that not even Alexander or any other of the great captains of the world would have dared to do the same. This dragging in of Alexander seems to me an afterthought, for the soldiers, most of whom most certainly could neither read nor write, could scarcely have been so free with classical allusions when they set forth their woes.

[1] One of the volcanoes in the valley of Mexico is often referred to as La Malinche.

[2] *Tenia buena expresion.*

However, Cortés was not a man to be turned back either by complaints or fears. He made the discontented men a speech stuffed so full of classical allusions that he fairly drove them from the field, and then, turning to the future, prophesied victory, assuring them that the worst danger now was past and peace with the Tlascalans was in sight.

A characteristic trait of Bernal Diaz's kindness of heart is shown by his saying, when the men all were pacified, in reference to the exponent of their grievances, "His name I will not mention, for his honour's sake." Many historians might take a lesson from the simple soldier who had nobility of heart enough to pen the phrase.

Peace was made at last—not signed, for one of the high contracting parties could not write; but it was ratified by the Indians burning incense before Cortés, bowing their heads, and placing their hands upon the ground.

Diaz gives us the soldier's view of peace when he says—

"We gave God many thanks for it (peace); and it came in time, for we were all so thin and worn out and discontented with so many battles, and of never knowing when we should see the end of them."

Throughout his narrative runs a noble vein of confidence in his leader, and he protests that once the army was well embarked into their adventure, that no one ever thought of rebellion or of mutiny. "I say that captain never was so well obeyed in the whole world." He is speaking of Cortés. "It is only natural," he goes on to say, "that experienced soldiers should advise their leader now and then." When he speaks

thus, one fancies that he is thinking of himself amongst the experienced soldiers; for though in years he was one of the younger men, in experience of Indian wars he was a veteran.

These sort of passages Prescott has picked out for censure, and from them he declares that Diaz was a boastful and a conceited man, vain of his exploits and without modesty. Nothing is further from reality. Prescott's mistake came from his Anglo-Saxon point of view, and from having formed in his own mind a false idea of the Latin characteristics and of the race. He evidently saw in the Spaniards a vainglorious set of men. Had he called them sententious, rather slow-minded, but with a sense of their own value fully developed, much as in the Scotch, he would have been nearer to the truth.

The conclusion of the peace negotiations shows to what a relative state of culture the Indians had attained. All was as formal as at a sitting of the Hague Peace Congress. Speeches were made, no doubt as pompous and as futile as they were at Bukarest or London during the Balkan War.

Following immemorial use and wont (in ancient and in modern times), each party tried to overreach the other, and the peace was made, as peaces usually are made, from purely material interests, and in the hope that the alliance which grew out of it would prove of benefit to each party and still not prejudice the interests of the other, a thing as manifestly impossible in those times as to-day. The chief of the Tlascalans, one Xicotenga, was tall and broad-shouldered. His face was strong, but pitted with many holes. In his

demeanour he was grave, and he seemed to be a little more than thirty-five years of age. So he appeared to Bernal Diaz, who no doubt was on guard about the person of Cortés, and listened carefully to everything, not knowing that he was destined to be the only man to write it down so that posterity might know what had occurred.

All this time envoys from Montezuma had been waiting for an audience. They brought rich presents, much gold and many rolls of cotton cloth, jewels and mantles made of humming-birds' feathers and of those of the quetzal. Montezuma sent a message by them to beware of the Tlascalans, not to make peace with them, and not to come with them to Mexico.

He was too late, for the alliance was already made, and even as they sat deliberating news came that the rest of the Tlascalan chiefs were coming in to join and to swear fealty, for the alliance had included admission to be vassals of the crown of Spain. It does not seem to strike Bernal as curious in the least that Cortés should have retained the presents sent from Mexico by Montezuma and at the same time practically declared war on him; for an alliance with his deadliest enemies was tantamount to that, as every Spaniard knew.

In order that the alliance should be properly cemented (for Cortés would not attend the sacrifices of Indians that took place to celebrate it, and as the Spaniards still watched at night all ready armed), an old chief called Maese Escaci (father of Xicotenga) hit upon a scheme.

He said: "Malinche,[1] so that you may all see how well we love you, and desire to content you, we wish

[1] That is, Cortés.

to give our daughters to you for your wives . . . for you are strong and valiant."

No sooner said than done; and shortly afterwards the old chief, who was blind, appeared leading his daughter by the hand, and followed by five other chiefs, each of whom brought a girl.

When the chief came up to Cortés, he felt his face and beard all over with his hand so that he might have some idea what kind of man he was. The girls, Diaz informs us, were stout and strong, and, "for Indians," pretty and well dressed.

"Malinche," said the chief, "receive my daughter . . . take her for yourself . . . and for the rest give them to the other captains."

Cortés thanked him and answered that he would take the girls, but for the present it were best that they should stay each with her father and her family. This disposition of Cortés' did not come from an access of virtue on his part, but because the damsels had not been baptized, and because it seemed to him a good occasion on which to preach against idolatry.

So well did he expound the mysteries of our faith, and with such unction, that he apparently nearly succeeded in breaking up the alliance that he had just made. At least it seems so, for when he had finished speaking about the abolition of human sacrifice—the only sensible thing that he seems to have said, for all the rest of his discourse was on those holy dogmas of our faith, only to be comprehended by those who are born in Christian lands—his captains interposed. Diaz says, with that curious, mechanical impartiality of his, that "these gentlemen, who were Pedro de Alvarado, Juan

Velazquez de Leon, and Francisco de Lugo, went to Cortés and said that a priest who was with them had spoken sensibly, and that it were best to let the Indians alone."

The priest, who seems to have had some glimmerings of sense, had remarked that it was best not to hurry things, and that it was not just for us to make them (the Indians) Christians by force, nor even, as in Cempoal, to throw their idols down, before they had some knowledge of the faith. Cortés, who was above all things a diplomatist, allowed himself to be persuaded, and when the Indian girls had duly been baptized, they were shared out amongst the pious soldiers of the cross.

When the cacique's daughter had been baptized under the name of Doña Luisa, Cortés, taking her by the hand, gave her to Pedro de Alvarado, who, one imagines, received her in God's name.

The next, who was a very pretty girl,[1] was christened Doña Elvira, and was given to Juan Velazquez de Leon. The others all were duly christened, and the incident was closed.

Diaz informs us that by Doña Luisa "Pedro de Alvarado, being a bachelor, had a son, Don Pedro, and a daughter, Doña Leonor, who is now the wife of Don Francisco de la Cueva, a worthy gentleman and cousin of the Duke of Albuquerque." Thus it appears that Indian as well as Jewish and Moorish blood flows in the veins of some of the most Christian families of Spain.

These matters being settled, presumably to the

[1] *Era muy hermosa.*

satisfaction of all parties, the Spaniards took counsel with their new allies. The old blind chieftain Maese Escaci informed them of Montezuma's power, told them of Mexico and all its wonders, its canals and drawbridges, its temples, palaces, and its great riches and its power. He also told them that there was a legend current in the place that men should come from the lands where the sun rises and should conquer Mexico.

Cortés, ever on the alert to take advantage of a point, in answer to the chieftain, who inquired if the Spaniards were the men spoken of in the legend, instantly answered yes.

"We come," he said, "from where the sun rises, most certainly." This was perhaps the first and the last time that he declared the truth to the poor Indians in the whole course of his life. He then went on to say that his lord the Emperor had sent him for that very reason, and that his orders were to hold them all as brethren, which by the grace of God he hoped that he should do. To this abominable lie, Diaz says, "we all said, Amen."

After some seventeen days spent in Tlascala to rest from their fatigues, and after having received four more ambassadors from Montezuma, who brought rich presents with them, they set out for Mexico.

## CHAPTER VI

Bernal Diaz has one of his characteristic outbursts here, for after having told us about the address Cortés made before they started, he says: "Many of us helped Cortés by calling out with a good will, 'Let us go on then, in God's name.'" Those who were of a contrary opinion were all men who had Indians in Cuba. "But I," he says, "and others of the poor soldiers always offered our souls to God who made them, and our bodies for wounds and hard work, until death, in the service of our Lord and of His Majesty."

There were two roads by which to march to Mexico —one by Cholula, which was a garrison of Montezuma's, the other by way of Guatocingo, held by friends of the Spaniards' allies.

Although the Tlascalans and their chiefs implored Cortés to avoid Cholula, and to put no trust in Montezuma or his ambassadors who were in the camp, his judgment on this occasion seems to have been at fault. It may be that he sought to show his new allies that he was not dependent on their help, for in spite of all that they could say he took the road by Cholula, and it was to cost him dear.

Diaz, who had a sound head and good judgment in such things, says that all the abuse of the Tlascalans in which the ambassadors from Mexico indulged, and all

their offers of assistance from their lord, were "to get us out of Tlascala," and so into his power. Before the army marched, Cortés, who understood perfectly the danger of his position, and did not wish to break with Montezuma altogether, arranged with his ambassadors to send two of his captains in their company to be presented to the King. The two he sent were Pedro de Alvarado and Bernardino Vazquez de Tapia.

Bernal Diaz, who was ill at the time of fever and ague and also wounded, says none of the soldiers liked the plan. He evidently did not care for it himself. So strongly did the soldiers represent their views that Cortés sent a dispatch to overtake the envoys ordering them to return.

When the ambassadors arrived in Mexico, Montezuma asked them what kind of men were the two Spaniards who should have come with them. They said that Alvarado was a handsome man who looked like the sun. Thay had made a picture of him which they showed to the "Great Montezuma," as Diaz always styled the Emperor. Tapia, they said, was a strong-looking, heavy man, and both were captains.

In their descriptions, Diaz says, they were exactly right, "for Pedro de Alvarado was of good stature and lightly made, and in his speech and presence and his face he was well graced, so that it appeared he was always laughing; and Bernardino Vazquez de Tapia was rather heavy, though of a good appearance." We were glad, he says, to see them both safely back in camp, and he adds: "It was not a good move of Cortés' to send them." Why, he does not explain.

The Indians of Cholula, who seem to have been, as

were all those of their race throughout America, past-masters in diplomacy, in answer to a message by Cortés to send some of their chief men to confer with him, only sent three or four poor Indians poorly dressed. This, of course, gave them time to make their preparations.

Cortés, who felt himself upon sure ground now that he had made an alliance with the Tlascalans, sent to tell them to send their chiefs at once, or he would hold them all as rebels, and act accordingly.

Rebellion, as we know on high authority, is as the sin of witchcraft, but who the Indians were to rebel against is not so clear. Still the word is mouth-filling and does duty even to-day to excuse injustice. The diplomacy of the men of Cholula was not exhausted, for they received the Spaniards royally, and at the same time sent to Montezuma for troops to fall upon them and take them at a disadvantage in their town.

They had dug deep trenches in the streets and put up walls to prevent the cavalry from acting, and prepared stores of stones and arrows to shoot from the flat house-tops. In short, all was ready for what is called a "massacre" to-day by newspapers when a European force gets itself defeated by half-armed savages.

Most certainly not a single Spaniard would have escaped had not a curious circumstance happened which gave them notice of the plot. An old Indian woman, wife of a chief, either being taken with Doña Marina's youth and her good looks, or perhaps having been sent to sound her and being led into greater confidences than she had intended, for Diaz leaves the matter vague, proposed to her to leave the camp and return with her to her house.

She said that she would marry her to a chief's son, and provide for her in every way. At last, finding that Doña Marina did not fall in with her plans, she told her that it was the only way to save her life. The town was full of Mexicans, she said, and every Spaniard would be slain that very night. She pressed Marina to lose no time and come with her at once.

On the pretext of packing up her jewels, she left the woman and at once informed Cortés. Next day he fell upon the Indians, who thought they had him in their power, and massacred them like sheep.

Diaz, who is not as a general rule squeamish about recounting horrors, simply says, "We killed many of them, and others were burned alive." When the Spaniards had killed as many of the helpless Indians as they chose, they let the Tlascalans who had been camped outside the town come in and slaughter as they pleased. "They did them much harm," is the phrase that Diaz uses, and went about the town "robbing and making prisoners."

At last the massacre was so enormous that "Cortés, the other captains and the soldiers, had pity on them, and we stopped the Tlascalans from doing them more harm."

The slaughter must have been immense before the sentiment of pity could have touched such iron hearts. In fact, the butchering of the Indians of Cholula was perhaps the most atrocious deed of the whole Conquest, and is a stain upon the fame of all engaged in it.

Diaz says, "We gave them a lesson that they should remember for all time," and in this instance he is right, for modern Mexicans, even those of Spanish

blood, always refer to this and all the other deeds of blood done at the Conquest as if their ancestors had been the sufferers.

This curious revulsion is not hypocrisy (which is not a Latin vice), but proceeds from the hatred of the Spaniards, which took its rise from the contempt they entertained for everyone born in America.

Even in those times of blood, critics were not wanting to protest. The great Las Casas lifted up his voice and, as Diaz says, "affirmed that for no cause but only for our own pastime, and because we wished it, that punishment was carried out." Diaz writes this indignantly, but at the same time seems to feel the need of some excuse, for he goes on to say: "Some good Religious, who were the first friars that His Majesty sent to New Spain after that Mexico was won . . . went to Cholula to find out and to learn and to inquire how and in what manner that punishment occurred, and the true reason of it, and the inquiry that they made was with the very priests and elders of the town; and after that they came to know the facts they found them neither more nor less than those that I have written in my history, and that if we had not given them the punishment that all our lives had been in peril from them."[1]

That is self-evident, and occurs in Africa to-day whenever Europeans find themselves in the like circumstances.

Diaz gives little description of the town, except to say that when they saw its towers and the white

[1] It was, in fact, a punitive expedition, as we facetiously call an expedition to punish men whose country we have stolen.

houses that it reminded them of Valladolid. Cortés himself in his second letter to the Emperor Charles v. describes it accurately.

"This city of Cholula," he writes, "is situated in a plain and has some twenty thousand inhabitants inside the town, and suburbs of equal size. . . . It is the city most suitable for Spaniards to live in that I have seen, between here and the ports, for it has well-watered pastures for breeding cattle, such as none other of the towns that I have seen, for there are so many people in these parts that there is not a hand's-breadth of the ground uncultivated, and still with all this cultivation they suffer from the lack of bread. The people of this city are better dressed than those of Tlascala, for the richer citizens all wear burnouses over their other clothes, though they are different from those in use in Africa, for they have armholes; but in their make and cloth and in the borders they are very much the same."

As to Tlascala, which town Diaz gives no description of, Cortés says: "This city is so large and has so many things worthy to be admired in it that though there is much I leave untold, the little that I will say is almost incredible, for it is larger than Granada, and far stronger, and has as good buildings,[1] and there are far more people in it than Granada had when it was first won, and better provision of all things of the earth, as bread and fowls and game, and fish from the rivers, and vegetables and many good provisions that they eat.

[1] Cortés must have forgotten the Alhambra, for there was no building standing in America in his time to compare with it, either in beauty or in size.

There is a market in this city in which more than thirty thousand people are to be seen daily selling and buying, besides many more smaller markets in different quarters of the town. In this market they sell all kinds of things, as provisions, clothes, and shoes. There are jewellers' shops where they sell gold and silver work and precious stones, and other jewels made of feathers, and all is as well managed as any market of the world.

"They sell all kinds of pottery and of very good class, as good as is the best in Spain. Charcoal is on sale, and wood, and herbs of all kinds, both for medicine and the pot. There are houses where the barbers wash and shave the head, and bath-houses. Finally, there is excellent order kept amongst them, and they are people of good understanding and policy, so that the best of Africa do not rival them."[1]

These were the cities that the young Bernal Diaz saw on his arrival in the New World. In his book, written in his old age, he says but little of them, keeping himself perhaps for his great and interesting description of Mexico itself. Still, being a man with such a memory for detail as he was, it is reasonable to suppose that he recalled them in his mind at least as vividly as they are described for us by his general. His style is far less cultured than was that used by Cortés; but, on the other hand, more interesting, perhaps by the very lack of culture that it shows.

Whilst all the massacring was going on in Cholula, and for a fortnight afterwards, Montezuma never ceased

[1] *Y es gente de toda razon.* It is a pity that the Spaniards and their descendants conveniently forget this, and denied the possession of reason by the Indians, saying they were but beasts.

from sending messengers to the Spanish camp. Diaz sometimes refers to them as spies; at other times as ambassadors, and it may well have been that they partook a little of both characters.

It is impossible not to admire both the tenacity and the diplomatic talents of Cortés. Nothing was able to turn him from his fixed design of pushing on. Situated as he was, far from the coast, without supplies or hope of reinforcements, his ships destroyed, and in the midst of thousands of men who though ill-armed could have destroyed the Spaniards by throwing earth upon them, as Diaz puts it, his confidence was great. Embassies came and went between the camp and Mexico, until at last Montezuma, either worn out or what the Scotch call "fey," yielded the point, and sent six of his chief men to bring a present of much gold and jewels and to invite Cortés to visit him.

Montezuma seems to have been from the first anxious to see the Spaniards, although his councillors strongly advised him not to allow them to visit him. Diaz says that the soldiers, especially those who like himself had neither land nor Indians in Cuba, were eager to push on. The Tlascala Indians warned Cortés against the expedition, saying that Montezuma was not to be trusted, and those from Cempoal took fright and returned home, in spite of all the efforts of Cortés.

Two roads led on to Mexico; but by both of them the mountains had to be crossed. They parted at the top of a ridge, and as he had been warned by the inhabitants of Guazocingo, through which he passed, that one of them was fortified and blocked with strong stockades, he sent for Montezuma's messengers and

asked for their advice. Though Diaz says nothing of it, one may suppose that advice was a euphuism, and that what he really did was to threaten them till they told him which road was unfortified. They said that the one that passed by Chalco was the best, as it was open all the way. Cortés, either because he thought they did not speak the truth, or for some other reason, hard to define, chose the road that he knew was blocked.

Diaz says the passage of it was very arduous, the cold intense, and the way steep and stony, and to make matters worse it began to snow and afterwards to freeze. They slept in Indian shelter-houses, and anyone who has done the same knows what a miserable night they must have passed, coming as they did straight from the coast lands. Diaz calls these shelter-houses *mesones*, an old-fashioned word still used in Mexico. In Spanish Bibles it is used for the Oriental khan, and Joseph and his brethren are said to have stopped at a *meson*. These shelters are the *Tambos* of the Peruvian Andes, and probably in Montezuma's time were but four walls with a small lean-to roof in a corner, under which the travellers lighted a fire.

Cortés says in his second letter to the Emperor that from this ridge they first caught sight of Mexico. If this is so, few men can have seen anything more wonderful, for from a distance, and surrounded by its lakes, the city must have appeared marvellous, set in a sea of gardens, and backed by the two volcanoes clothed in perpetual snow. As they prepared to start, four more ambassadors appeared, bringing rich presents, and a request that the Spaniards should not enter Mexico. They tried by all means in their power to prevent

Cortés advancing, talking of the bad roads and the lack of food upon the way.

To all their arguments, says Diaz, Cortés listened most courteously, and then embracing them, told them that his Emperor had given his command that he should go at any cost, and so set out on the last stage of his eventful journey, not knowing what would happen at the end. In fact, it was the only choice he had, for had he then turned back and confessed failure, the Indians in the towns that he had passed would certainly have attacked him, and not a man would have survived.

Bernal Diaz seems to have appreciated the position at its full value, for he quotes with unction Cortés' speech, in which he said that the Lord Jesus Christ had guarded them from all past dangers and would protect them from all those to come. From thence the march led between towns and villages, past temples and tall towers, mostly built on the edges of the lakes. The whole scene was so novel and so strange, the sense of present danger was so great, and the bewilderment of the Spaniards so complete when they saw the numberless canoes upon the lakes, the various chiefs who came to meet them with their followers, that Bernal Diaz marvels how he is able to describe it all, "for it is wonderful," he says, "how I can write about it . . . and I can scarcely tell about so many things, neither before either heard or seen or dreamed about, such as we saw that day."

He tells about the fruit trees and the birds, the fields of maize, the flowers, the rose bushes, and the ponds of water, "for I was never tired of looking at the diversity of trees and smelling their perfumes."

The town of Iztapalapa seems to have been what

moved him to the greatest admiration. "I say once more that I kept looking at it all, and I thought that not in the whole world could there be any lands like these, for in those days there was no Peru, or mention of it." Then without comment, but so drily that one fancies that it lets one see into his thoughts, he adds, "Now all this town is ruined, lying on the ground and lost, and not a stone of it remains."

"Let us pass on," he says, as if he felt the pity of it, "and I will tell how the caciques of that town and those of Cuzocoan brought a present of gold worth about two thousand crowns."

Then comes another passage, which the old soldier must have penned with regret in his old age.

"At that time it was a mighty town, built half on land and half in the water; now all the ground is dry, and men now sow where once there was a lake, and it is all so changed that if I had not seen it, I should not say what I have said, for it appears impossible that all the land was full of water then, and now is sown with maize . . . and all so spoiled."

Nothing of all that, he could have felt at that time, for next day, after a short march, they entered Mexico.

# CHAPTER VII

"NEXT day early in the morning we left Iztapalapa, and followed on a paved road, about eight paces wide, which goes so straight to the City of Mexico that it appears to me there is not a bend in it."

Had Bernal Diaz taken notes, most probably the description of Mexico that he gives would have been as lifeless as that of an ordinary, modern traveller; but the notes that he took were photographed upon his brain and had become a part of it, so that all he had to do was to develop what was there.

Diaz remarks that the reciprocal astonishment of Spaniards and Mexicans was great. The Spaniards wondered at the great city they beheld, and on the tops of towers, on temple roofs, and crowding every bridge stood crowds of Mexicans. It was no wonder, as he says, "for they had never either seen horses or men such as ourselves." All seems to surge up in his mind, as he writes, after so many years, and most of all he wonders at the daring of himself and of his friends.

We were no more than four hundred and fifty men all told, he says. Truly the Spaniards must have seemed but a small band, as on that morning, in the rising sun, with the white mists just rising from the lakes, they marched along the paved road, straight down towards the unknown town. Borne high upon a

litter, with his chief warriors on either side, the Spaniards beheld Montezuma coming to meet Cortés. Upon the one hand and the other were the lords of Iztapalapa, of Tacuba, Tezcuco, and Cuyoacan, and as the litter made its way through the dense crowd of the assembled Mexicans, the Emperor alighted, close to some little towers just outside Mexico.

The chiefs supported him as he advanced, under a canopy "marvellously rich." It was a vivid green, and made of feathers richly worked in gold, with silver and with pearls and green transparent stones.[1]

The Emperor's sandals were all jewelled and the soles made of gold. In front of him there went a band of chiefs who swept the ground on which he was to pass,[2] and afterwards they laid down cloths for him to walk upon. None of the chiefs dared ever look the Great Montezuma (as Diaz calls him) in the face, except the four who held him up, who were related to him.

Cortés, who was a gentleman, got off his horse and advanced towards the Emperor. They saluted one another with great courtesy, and Cortés made a gesture as if he wished to give his hand to Montezuma. "I think that Montezuma would not suffer this, but gave his to Cortés."

Cortés then took a necklace of coloured glass and hung it over Montezuma's neck, and would have embraced him, had not one of the attendant chiefs

[1] *Piedras chalchihuis.* Perhaps these were pieces of matrix emerald, but commentators (as is usual) disagree.

[2] This interesting custom might be brought into use at home. Hereditary legislators would no doubt be glad to serve their sovereign as street sweepers.

detained his arm.[1] The Spaniards, on the other hand, under no obligation to cast down their eyes—a practice most un-Spanish—no doubt looked at the Emperor as so much walking loot, and Bernal Diaz, one may be sure, gazed also, taking in every detail of the scene.

Thus they entered into Mexico, and Montezuma, having accompanied them to the quarters that he had caused to be prepared, took leave of them and went back to his palace, which was close at hand.

If he slept well that night, is not related; but in any case it must have been the last night that he passed undisturbed in the short spell of life that was assigned to him.

Nothing is more remarkable than the way in which Diaz always presents a portrait of anyone who is essential to his book. How difficult an art it is, only those know who have essayed it, and that it is an art easy to fail in can be seen almost every day in newspapers and books.

"The Great Montezuma," he says, "would be about forty years of age, and of good stature, and well made, lean, and without much flesh, and his complexion not too dark, but of the proper shade and hue that befits an Indian, and he wore his hair not very long, but so that it covered up his ears, his beard small, black and growing well but thinly, and his face rather long and merry, his eyes were pleasant, and all his person showed a good disposition, and when necessary he could be grave.

[1] History repeats itself. Did not a viceroy at a reception actually in a fine poetic frenzy once throw his arm—to show his friendly feelings—over the shoulder of an Indian prince. His kindly, if romantic, action probably defiled the man and caused him days of *poojah* to take off the stain.

"He was both clean and careful in his dress, and bathed once every day, towards evening."[1]

The long description that Diaz gives of Mexico, Prescott and others have made known to the world. It is the most minute and careful that possibly exists of any city seen in like circumstances, and with the letters of Cortés, form all that is known of the appearance of the city at the time. When he has finished it, Diaz, who probably wrote at white heat, with all the memories of his youth crowding into his brain, says, "And because I am tired of writing of this matter, and my readers will be as tired, I leave off talking of it."

Diaz says, "Such was our adventurous and daring entry into the great city of Tenostitlán[2] on the eighth day of the month of November, and in the year 1579 of our Lord Jesus Christ. Thanks be to the Lord Jesus Christ for all." There is a Scottish but most unnecessary proverb in a Scotchman's mouth, "Lord, gie us a guid conceit of ourselves," which seems to have been also known in Spain, at least in spirit, judging by many passages in Bernal Diaz's book.

The first few days the Spaniards spent in Mexico were like a dream. Montezuma took them to see the city, the temples, and the streets. "With us were soldiers who had been in many parts of the world, in Constantinople, and in all Italy, and Rome, and they said that a great square, so well laid out, with such a plan, and

[1] Diaz seldom breaks up his sentences, but uses commas after every phrase through a long paragraph, just as we do in legal documents. The effect in such a portrait as I have quoted is often lifelike. One almost hears his long sigh of relief as he lays down his pen.

[2] Sometimes he spells Tenostitlán, at others Tenochtitlán, and in several other ways.

size, and with so many people in it, they had seen nowhere."

Diaz himself says that it was larger than the great square of Salamanca,[1] and that it was paved. Nothing impressed him more than the view from the great temple, "for that great and accursed temple[2] was so high that it dominated everything, and from it we saw the three paved roads that entered Mexico, and we saw the aqueduct that comes from Chapultepec, which supplies the town, and across their roads, the bridges thrown here and there, underneath which entered the water of the lake—and we saw all about the various towns, temples and shrines, all built like castles or like forts, and so shining white that it was marvellous, and after we had looked well at it all, and had considered what we saw, we turned again to look at the great square and at the multitude that filled it, some buying, others selling.

"The noise they made and the hum of so many voices could be heard a league away."

Naturally, the first difference that the Spaniards had with Montezuma was about religion—that sweet religion for which the first blood shed in the world was spilled. It was not wonderful that Diaz who had left Spain a boy, and came from a small provincial town, should be astonished at the sight of the great Tenostitlán.

Cortés himself tells us in his second letter to the Emperor Charles v. that Mexico was quite as large as Seville or as Cordoba. It probably stood over much

[1] The writer known as the "Anonymous Conqueror" says it was three times as large.

[2] Upon its right now stands the Cathedral.

more ground than either of those cities, and its position was (and is) incomparably fine. The great volcanoes in the distance, the cultivated plain, the lakes, then covered with canoes that went and came in hundreds, the canals which gave an air of Venice, the drawbridges, the busy, chattering crowds, the temples and high towers, the look as of a capital of a great state, the wealth and the bright climate, all combined to fill the imagination of men who from the day that they were born had fought with poverty. Here was the dreamed of El Dorado, at last patent to all their eyes. Here was the nation of idolaters that they were providential instruments to save. Lastly, here was the gold that sanctifies, that wipes out bloodshed, atones for cruelty, makes man as God, so that he gets enough of it, and which then as now went hand in hand with faith, with but this difference, that Diaz and his bold compeers believed themselves the instruments of God, whilst we go out to spread the light of progress and of peace.

Progress and civilisation misapplied, are the chief curses that Europeans have carried to the remotest corners of the earth, slaying, enslaving, and conquering in their name.

Diaz, although he got scant honour and no gold from Mexico, had at least golden recollections in his old age of the great city that he helped to overthrow. With simple faith and some prolixity he tells of the construction of the church the Spaniards built. Their zeal was so intense they finished it within three days and set the cross up right in front of it. Mass was said in it, until their wine gave out. Diaz, whose piety never interfered with his artistic sense, tells us the reason was that

Cortés, the friar, and several captains had been ill, and all the wine had been used up to give them strength, except a little, which they had kept for Mass. Their supply of powder too was running short, so that they found themselves deprived of their best arms, temporal and spiritual alike.

Diaz did not despair, although he probably was quite aware of the dangerous position they were in. He says, "Our Lord put His hand to all our enterprises," and this, of course, may have been true enough. Still, as a good soldier, Diaz was one of those who with "four of our captains" went to Cortés to put him on his guard against the wiles of Montezuma.

They put before him all the difficulties of the situation, and said they all were in such fear that their food turned to poison in their stomachs as they ate.[1]

When Cortés heard this he told them that he was not asleep, and then revealed his plan to make a prisoner of Montezuma. Nothing more foolhardy or at the same time simpler and more likely of success ever entered anybody's brain. Had Cortés not been called away to repel the forces that Velazquez sent against him under Narvaez, most likely Mexico would have been his without a blow.

At first the soldiers were afraid to venture all for all, but after much deliberation they agreed.

Diaz says, "As we had determined the day before to make a prisoner of Montezuma we passed the night in prayer, beseeching God that it might all turn out for His holy service." So may a band of brigands

[1] *Ni con cuanta comida que comiamos, que todo se nos hacia rejalgarea el estomago.*

pray for their success before they go out to their work, and so do armies pray, each side beseeching God that their guns may be directed for His service, even in wars to-day.

The Spaniards' prayers seem to have been answered, for Montezuma made no resistance, and had he done so, Captain Juan Velazquez de Leon was quite prepared to run his sword through him, observing that by doing so he would either lose or save their lives.

So Montezuma was made prisoner in his own capital, but the Spaniards found that for all that their position still grew worse. They did not make things easier by burning several of Montezuma's captains who had attacked the fort Cortés had built at Cempoal and killed the Governor. Diaz sees in the execution an act of strength; but who shall say just where strength ends and cruelty begins? Yet Diaz was by no means bloodthirsty; but probably considered any attempt of the Mexicans to be free was as the sin against the Holy Ghost. During the imprisonment of Montezuma, Diaz shows himself at his best. He was proud of the fact that Montezuma saw he was a gentleman, and relates how he always saluted the poor captive when he went to and fro.

"And as at that time I was young, when I happened to be on duty guarding him, or when I passed before him, always with respect, I took my steel cap off and saluted him."

The goodwill Montezuma showed him moved him to ask him "to give him as a favour a pretty Indian girl." Montezuma, who knew that a king's face should show grace, called him and said, "Bernal Diaz del

Castillo, they tell me that you are poor[1] in gold and clothes, so I will tell them to give you a pretty girl. Treat her well; she is the daughter of a chief. They will also give you gold and native cloth."

"I answered with great respect that I kissed his hands for so great a favour, and hoped that God would prosper him."

Manners have little altered in essentials, as we know; but somehow the natural air of the transaction puts it on a higher footing than the casual amours of a young man of Bernal Diaz's rank in the India or China of to-day.

During the first part of his captivity Montezuma seems to have lived on easy terms with all the Spaniards. Diaz shows him to us as a man not devoid of humour, in his account of the game of *totoloque*, which they all played to pass the time.

"Sometimes Montezuma played with Cortés at *totoloque*, which is a game to which they give that name." They played it with little quoits made of gold, and it appears the scoring was marked upon the

[1] Diaz makes Montezuma say to him, "Eres motolinea de oro." Motolinea or Motolinia was an Indian word meaning poor. The Mexicans called the preaching friar Toribio de Benavente Motolinia, because he would never own property, and always went barefooted. He wrote an interesting account of the country. In his *Memoriales*, published in Mexico by Izcahalzet, 1903, amongst other interesting passages, he has one on humming-birds. He tells us that the Indians believed these birds died in the winter and came to life again in spring, but that some men did not believe it. As he was preaching one day to the Indians, in spring, on the immortality of the soul, he saw his audience was not convinced. As it chanced, in the middle of his sermon, a humming-bird came to life again and flew over the Indians' heads. Pointing to it he said, "Behold the truth of what I say. Who that has seen this miracle can question immortality?" The illustration was an apt one, the thought was beautiful, and White of Selborne seems to have been of the same opinion in regard to swallows.

ground. "I remember that Cortés played with Pedro de Alvarado and the Great Montezuma with a cousin of his own, a chief, and Pedro de Alvarado always marked a notch more than did Cortés. When Montezuma saw this he said laughingly that he did not wish Tonatio, for thus they called Pedro de Alvarado, to play with Cortés, for he made much *iseoxol*, which in their language means to cheat, and somehow always seemed to win. Cortés and all of us who were on guard, laughed heartily at what Montezuma said. People will ask why was it that we laughed? It was because Pedro de Alvarado, being as he was a handsome man and easy mannered, liked to talk a little carelessly, and we all knew it—but to return again back to our game. If Cortés gained he gave the jewels that he won to Montezuma's cousin, and if Montezuma won he gave his winnings to those of us who were on guard."

As neither Cortés nor any of the Spaniards had any jewels of their own, all had to come from Montezuma's pocket, which of course was natural enough in the position he was placed. For all that, Diaz seems to have been aware, almost alone of all the conquerors, that Montezuma was a prince. He says after having told us that he saluted Montezuma with respect that "besides being King of Mexico his person and condition invited respect." In all the writings of the Conquerors hardly a phrase of the same kind occurs in speaking of an Indian Chief. More frequently they are referred to as "heathen dogs," as "infidels," as "people without reason," and other epithets are liberally bestowed upon them, which in the end resolve them-

selves into bald statements of the facts that the Indians were men of a different faith to that current in Spain, and had no guns to make their faith in the least worthy of belief. Nothing is more remarkable than the way in which Montezuma had made himself beloved. After several partial revolts had taken place, Cortés persuaded him to swear obedience to the Emperor.[1] Montezuma, who knew well enough that by so doing he bade good-bye to his own kingship, could not restrain his tears on the day that he took the oath.

"We loved him so much," Diaz says, "and so much from our hearts, that when we saw him weep our eyes too were affected, and there were soldiers who wept as much as he."

"Soldiers" one almost thinks should be read "soldier," for in that host there could have been but few soft-hearted men. All this time, whilst Cortés was piling up mountains of gold and quarrelling with his men as to his share, that of the Emperor, and how much gold fell to the share of every individual man, the Mexicans were planning a revolt. The Spaniards knew this, and they used to sleep prepared, fully armed and with their horses saddled by their sides. "Our beds were but a little straw, laid on a mat, and anyone who had a little tent lay in it, booted and armed and with our horses saddled and bridled all the day: and all were ready at the call to arms . . . and though I do not boast of it, I will say something else, that I became so much accustomed to go armed and to sleep in the manner I have said, that after New Spain was conquered I always used to sleep in my clothes and on

[1] Charles v.

the floor, and that I still sleep better that way than upon mattresses, and now when I have to go to any of the towns of my *encomienda*[1] I never take a bed with me, and I say also that I can never sleep more than a portion of the night, and I have to get up now and then to look at the heavens and the stars, and to walk about a little in the dew, and that without putting anything on my head, not even a cloth, and, thanks to God, it does me no harm, for I am so well accustomed to it, and I write this, so that people may know what we, the real Conquerors, were like, and how well accustomed we were to arms and watching."

It is a fine picture of a war-worn soldier, and so modestly told that one wonders what Prescott could have been thinking of when he called him boastful and vainglorious. So he played his part during Montezuma's imprisonment, watching and sleeping armed, and just when he might naturally have been looking for repose, came the strange episode of Pamphilo de Narvaez, who landed with a well-equipped army, sent by Velazquez to seize Cortés and send him back to Cuba as a prisoner.

[1] *Encomienda* may perhaps be rendered "fief." He was writing in his old age, and his *encomienda* was in Guatemala.

## CHAPTER VIII

Just as it would be to-day, in the time of Montezuma and Cortés, all individual effort was held anathema. Men such as were Cortés naturally were intolerable to governors such as Velazquez, who held a regular title from his king, to be a conqueror. Clive, Warren Hastings, Lally Tollendal, and a host of others all show that the same spirit still survived, and I suppose still does so, even to the present day.

These men had all committed the unpardonable crime of having genius. In a society that was constituted on a reasonable plane, they would have all been honoured. As it was, dullards agreed to damn them, and all of them, Clive, Lally Tollendal, Warren Hastings, and Cortés, passed miserable lives, threatened incessantly by fools, and died neglected by the countries to whom they had brought empires, unsolicited.

No sooner had he landed than Narvaez sent to Montezuma to tell him that Cortés and all his followers were rebels against their king, and had no legal right to conquer Mexico. What effect this made on Montezuma we do not know; but it spurred on Cortés and all his followers to fight.

No one was more determined than Bernal Diaz, who all through seems to have thought that, as a modern sage has put it, "those who can, do, and those who cannot, teach."

Almost all that we know about the struggle between Narvaez and Cortés,[1] we learn from Bernal Diaz's book; but we see everything clearly from his simple tale. We discern plainly that Narvaez cared a hundred times more to make a prisoner of Cortés than to take Mexico. Everything he did has to be viewed from the standpoint, either of one who thinks authority a gift from heaven, or one who thinks free will and genius the divinest attributes of man.

One, will see in Narvaez, with his secret embassies to Montezuma and his intrigues, a patriot seeking to uphold the prestige of his lord, for patriotism is the defence of overlords against the mob, when it is stripped of vain, unnecessary words. The other, will see a patriot in the man who, with slender force, scant money, and no influence at home, went forth and conquered, and in so doing gave an empire to his native land.

Cortés at once mustered his men and marched, leaving, unfortunately, Alvarado in command in Mexico. Pedro de Alvarado was, as Bernal Diaz says, a great talker, and though brave and handsome, a severe captain and a cruel man.

Diaz went with Cortés with those who marched against Narvaez, and no doubt prayed to "Our Gods, and the Great Woman of Castille,"[2] before he went. Narvaez and his army, a much stronger force than that Cortés had with him, had come to Cempoal, and lay there waiting, not daring to advance for want of guides.

When the muster of Cortés' men took place they

[1] Cortés himself relates the whole episode, but almost without details, in his Second Letter to Charles v.

[2] *Nuestros Dioses y la Gran Muger de Castilla.* This is the first and possibly the only time that it has been asserted the family of the Redeemer was of Spanish origin; but I well believe it to be true.

found they numbered two hundred and seventy-six, all told, including those who played the drum and fife. However, they were all picked men, and chiefly, as was Bernal himself, from the Castiles, accustomed all of them to heat and cold, long marches, and scant food. His account of the expedition reads like the march of Bolivar's men to Boyacá, or that of San Martin across the Andes, in the revolutionary wars.

They passed the sierras, always descending towards the coast, sleeping beside the banks of rivers,[1] stopping as little as they could, and for their food occasionally killing game.[2]

When they got down to the hot country they rested for the heat. This they were wise in doing, for the sudden change is most severe. Sixty miles on a fast-pacing mule takes one from San Luis Potosi to the Rio Verde, in a day's ride, right from a zone of oaks and pines to one of palm trees, and of suffocating heat. Those who have done it know the lassitude it brings, and men who, as the army of Cortés, marched it on foot (travelled it, as we say in Scotland), carrying their armour and their arms, must have been in good need of rest.

Narvaez, whose men were what was known in Spanish as *bisoños*, "that is raw soldiers (still with the advantage of numbers that he had, was certain of success), seems to have done but little to make ready for the fight. His men occupied certain temples, which were defensible and high. The rest were all encamped, and though he

[1] *Dormimos en un repecho, cerca de un riachuelo.*

[2] *Se mataron dos puercos de la tierra.* These were peccaries. The soldiers took it for a good omen, Diaz says, and well they might had the animals been such curiosities of the animal creation as he believed. He says, "Tienen el ombligo en el espinazo."

had thrown out a picket of his cavalry, they seem to have kept but a slack watch.

The Indians, who always know all that is going on in their own country, told him that Malinche (Cortés) and his men were on the march; but he took little heed, and all this time on various pretexts Cortés sent messengers into his camp to spy his numbers out.

When all was ready, the advancing force set out. All were lean, war-hardened men, inured to perils, able to watch all night and march as soon as it was light. To them, Cortés made his accustomed speech. Diaz says that he was sometimes "honey-tongued,"[1] and certainly he never more required to be so than he did on that day.

He spoke to them of glory and of Spain, and we may suppose, as Sydney Smith once put the matter, of "sweethearts and of gin." Then he named captains, and in his host was one "who was called Pizarro," a near relation of his own. They both came from Estremadura, and to-day their houses stand, each with the coat of arms, gained in Peru and Mexico, the chiefest objects of the *plazas* of their respective towns.

"This Pizarro[2] was a brisk young man," and to him Cortés gave sixty soldiers. Amongst them was Bernal Diaz, no doubt as sergeant or as corporal, for he had by this time seen much service in the Indian wars.

To Sandoval, whom he named "Alguacil Mayor of New Spain," he gave the order to attack Narvaez in the temple where he lodged and make him prisoner. Sandoval was a young officer, the owner of the good horse Motilla, and a great friend of Diaz. Cortés

[1] *Era á veces meloso en el hablar.*
[2] *El Pizarro era suelto mancebo.*

finished his speech with one of those old tags that we have all found useful at a pinch, "That it was better far to die with honour, than to live in shame." Diaz, who would have made a fine reporter, adds, "As it was raining at the time, and late, he said no more." No reason in the world could be more sound or more conclusive for finishing a speech, and if some man were to set a shower bath up in the House of Commons and place the string of it in Mr. Speaker's hand, he would most certainly merit a reward, for there, neither rain nor the lateness of the hour ever prevents the dripping of the words.

Diaz was, as we know, with "my Captain Pizarro, who told us that the first thing we had to do was to charge home on the artillery." Captain Pizarro on this occasion showed what was in him, for throughout his life his first endeavour always was to charge right home. Even at his death, left all alone, he seized a sword and ran in on his murderers, killing several of them.

He told us, Diaz says, how we should hold our pikes and bear ourselves when the artillery was won. Diaz by this time must have been quite as well qualified to give as to receive instructions in such things. Yet the wise captain in all ages always has said, "Do this; now you are doing it; see what you have done," for military brains have their abode in the wise captain's head alone, the soldier's being situated in his boots. The watchword that they had was "Espiritu Santo," that of Narvaez "Santa Maria." Thus did they, perhaps unwittingly, leave to the Creator a deciding vote.

On this occasion Sandoval and Diaz entered into the friendship that lasted all their lives; for that night Sandoval said to him, if after having taken the artillery

they both should be alive, he wanted him to join his company.

Night fell very dark, as is usually the case in southern latitudes, and under cover of it Cortés began his march to the attack. Mexico was not even conquered, and Alvarado was shut up with but a little band of men in a great city, and yet Cortés put all his future to the touch, in an adventure which, had it failed, history would have written him down a fool.

The rain fell heavily, and as the war-worn soldiers marched along in silence, for Cortés had given orders that neither fife nor drum should sound, they came upon one of the spies sent by Narvaez, fast asleep. His name was "Galleguillo," that is, the little Galician, and they caught him sleeping, covered with a rug. "Poor fellow," Diaz says, "as he was not accustomed to the rain and the cold, he had lain down to sleep."

A little farther on they came upon two soldiers who, as they kept but a slack watch, were easily surprised. One of them managed to escape, and fled to his own camp, shouting, "To arms!"

They passed the river, "which as it rained was flooded, and the stones moved as we walked, and as we carried all our arms upon our backs caused us much trouble." It also must have hushed the noise of their approach, and in the rain and darkness they advanced like phantoms, stealing on the camp.

Nothing, as everybody knows who has been on Indian frontiers, is so likely to breed a panic in a camp as an attack delivered in the darkness and the rain. So it fell out on this occasion, and almost before Narvaez had time to call to arms, Cortés was on him, so quickly

that his artillery had only time to fire four of the guns. This shot killed "three of our men."

Upon that instant, all our captains and our men came up, stopping by the way to dismount several of the opposing cavalry. "Some of us"—that is Captain Pizarro, Bernal Diaz, and their sixty men—"after we took the guns had to stand by them, for Narvaez from his quarters[1] kept firing on us, both with crossbows and with guns."

Sandoval came rushing up and joined their forces, and together they advanced, forcing the enemy down the temple steps.

"We fought for some time with our pikes, and suddenly we heard Narvaez crying out, 'Saint Mary, help me, I am dead, and also I have lost an eye!'"[2]

"When we heard this"—it is to be remembered that they were fighting in the dark—"we shouted, 'Victory, victory for the Holy Ghost!'" For all that, the temple was not won until one "Martin Lopez, he who made the brigantines, as he was tall of stature, set the straw thatching of the temple roof alight, and then most of Narvaez's men came rolling down the steps."

One, Pero Sanchez Farfan, took Narvaez prisoner, and "I" (says Diaz) "gave him to Sandoval." As all their lives were yet in doubt, only the darkness having stopped Narvaez and his men from overwhelming them by force of numbers, they put two pair "of the best fetters" on Narvaez, and shouted to Cortés.

[1] In a high temple.

[2] *Muerto me han* seems in this instance to mean "I am kilt," and must be read after the Hibernian manner, for the man had only lost an eye.

Cortés came up, unrecognisable, covered with perspiration and with blood, for he had been running here and there encouraging his men, and as the night was hot and his armour heavy he could hardly stand. When he could speak, he asked twice, "Where is Narvaez?" and Sandoval replied, "We have him here."

Cortés said, all out of breath, "Take good care of him," and then plunged back into the fight.

"It was still night, and the rain still kept falling now and then, and then the moon got up, for when we first arrived it was pitch dark . . . but as there happened to be many fire-flies on the wing, they helped us, for the men of Narvaez thought they were the matches of our guns."[1]

The meeting of Narvaez and Cortés is told in the best manner that Diaz can command. After Narvaez had had his wounds dressed hastily, Cortés came up, unknown to him, and when he heard that the man looking at him was Cortés, he said, "Sir Captain Cortés, you may thank your luck for this your victory, and for having taken me." Cortés answered him that he gave thanks to God who had given him the day and to his captains and stout comrades; but that it was one of the least things that he had done in the New Spain.

This in effect was true, if not quite courteous to a fallen foe. When all was over, the captives who had fought against Cortés came to make terms with him and kiss his hand. They found him sitting in an arm-chair dressed in a robe of orange-tawny silk, with his armour

[1] They always come out on a rainy night. Flintlocks were slowly coming into fashion at the time; but the matchlock was the usual style of gun used by the soldiery.

lying at his feet. Bernal relates with pride that he was one of those who stood behind his chair.

"It was a sight to see, the grace with which he (Cortés) spoke to them. He embraced some of them, and to all he spoke such favourable words that we could see that he was full of joy." Scant time enough he had for joy, for the worst news had come from Mexico. Pedro de Alvarado, who apparently had lost his head, had sallied out from the palace where he was in safety and fallen upon the unsuspecting Mexicans who were assembled at a feast, and butchered many of them.

Perhaps his action was but the high spirits of a young officer, for it is tantalising to bear a sword at your side, amongst a lot of "niggers," and not use it now and then.

However, it had far-reaching consequences, and set Cortés and Bernal Diaz to retrace their steps towards Mexico. Cortés, who was a reasonable man, appears to have been furious; but he dissembled, as he indeed was bound to, and wrote to Alvarado to be careful that Montezuma did not escape, and that he was coming to his aid.

So well he spoke that he persuaded nearly all the men he had just been fighting with, to march with him, though Diaz says had they but known what waited them, no one of them had gone. They reached Tlascala by forced marches; but most unluckily Diaz omits to tell us how many days they took upon the way. There they got news of what was going on, and instantly set out again, reaching the city on the day of St. John of June (1520).

As they arrived at the great palace from whence they had set out, so short a time ago, the Emperor came out to greet them, but Cortés, "as he returned a conqueror, refused to hear him, and Montezuma went back to his room downcast and very sad."

He had good cause to be, and so in fact had all the Spaniards, shut up as they were in a great city such as Mexico, surrounded by their foes. Pedro de Alvarado tried to excuse himself; but Cortés spoke to him angrily, saying that he had put their lives in peril and done irreparable harm.

# CHAPTER IX

The Spaniards who had returned, war-worn and tired from their victory over Narvaez and his men, now found themselves obliged to fight not only for their conquest, but for their very lives. Cortés most likely saw the folly of his lieutenant's action, and Diaz certainly does not spare his censures, saying roundly that Alvarado had invented a false charge of treason against Montezuma to justify his cruelty.

The situation of the Spaniards was not enviable, for the outraged Mexicans thronged into every street, all calling out for blood. During the skirmishes and battles that took place before the Spaniards beat the well-known retreat, known as "La Noche Triste," Bernal Diaz played his part like a man. As on one occasion he remarks, "We retired all badly wounded," he certainly was in the thick of the worst fighting. Soldiers who had fought against the Turks assured him that they had seen nothing to compare to the fury of the Mexicans, who did not seem to care how many of their men were slain, so that they killed a Spaniard or a horse. The captive Montezuma seems to have done all he could to pacify his subjects, but in vain, for if we are to trust what Bernal Diaz says, they wounded him with arrows and with stones, when he appeared upon a platform of the tower to speak to them of peace.

Mexican historians have said this is not true, and that Cortés privately had him executed; but this can hardly be the case, for Montezuma, as long as he still lived, was a trump card in the Spaniards' hands; but once that he was dead, all moderating influence was gone.

Diaz says that he was mourned sincerely by the soldiers "as he had been their father, and that it was no marvel, seeing he was so good." He at least seems to have both loved and respected the poor, captive king, and always calls him "the Great Montezuma," and dwells with pleasure on the fact that he had always been his friend.

It is consolatory to hear that Montezuma died in his own faith (whatever that faith was), resisting all attempts at his conversion by the good friar, who, Diaz says, was with him till his death.

As Montezuma, after he received his wounds, would not allow them to be dressed, or either eat or drink, he died most likely of a broken heart—a malady, perhaps, unknown to his stout chronicler.

Cortés sent back the body to his friends, which naturally stirred them to greater fury, and they began again to attack the Spaniards with volleys of arrows and of stones and flights of javelins, not tipped with iron, but their points hardened in the fire.[1]

At last the Spaniards determined to retreat, as day by day their men were being killed. They left the city just at nightfall, thinking the Mexicans would not be on the alert. Their way led over a raised mound, narrow and

[1] These javelins, called by the Mexicans *Atlatl*, were launched with a throwing stick. Diaz refers to them as *varas tostadas*. The quilted jackets the Mexicans used were called *escaupiles*.

paved, and running through the lake. Between them and the land were several bridges, and on either side the Indians swarmed in their canoes. As all the bridges had been broken down to bar their passage, they had to carry planks on which to pass the horses and their guns.

"We set out," Diaz says, "at nightfall, and it was very dark, with a fine rain." This deadened the noise they made, and let them pass the first of the broken bridges unobserved, with the horses, guns, and all the gold they had collected during their stay in Mexico. This gold the Tlascaltecans carried, and the infantry brought up the rear.

Instantly they were beset on all sides, and from the lake the Indians in their canoes rained arrows on them. Soon all was confusion, and Bernal Diaz only can relate that which he saw himself as he retreated, mixed up in the darkness, with about fifty men. Fighting each yard, at length they came to the town of Tacuba, which stood on the dry land. Diaz relates at this point one of the incidents of the battle that shows the stuff of which they all were made. A cry arose that there were still some soldiers left at the last bridge, and Cristobal de Oli and Sandoval, with Francisco de Morla and other captains, called to Cortés to stop and help them.

The answer that he gave was that anyone who returned was certain to be killed. Still he returned with Christobal de Oli and Sandoval, Alonso de Avila, and others on horseback, and seven or eight soldiers who remained unwounded from the fight. However, as it happened, they had not far to go, "for soon they came on Pedro de Alvarado, badly wounded and on foot, but

carrying a lance. His good chestnut mare was killed, and he brought with him seven soldiers, three of our own men and four who came with Narvaez, but all wounded, and eight Tlascalan Indians, all running blood from many wounds . . . let us return to Pedro de Alvarado, when Cortés and the other captains saw him, tears stood in their eyes," for then they learned the death of all their friends. Three hundred men and more than twenty horses had been killed; and Alvarado, with the few wounded men he brought with him, crossed the broken bridges, stepping on their bodies and their arms.

This was the occasion, as some historians say, that Alvarado, left alone upon the far side of a broken bridge, jumped over the canal upon his lance, using it as a leaping pole. Diaz is rather doubtful of the feat, and says, "At that time none of the soldiers had leisure to observe if he jumped much or little, for we had quite enough to do to save our lives."

Diaz has something "pawky" in his nature, for he says, why, if Alvarado passed the bridge upon the bodies of the horses and the men, was he obliged to jump?

Let Diaz say what he likes, the legend has stuck fast, and the first thing I saw in Mexico, upon my way to the post office after a journey of two months from Texas, having left my wife, tired out and seated on the kerbstone, holding my rifle and my horse, was a plate let into the wall with the inscription, "Here was Alvarado's leap."

Let us leave this, as Diaz might have said, and return to the broken Spaniards, struggling along towards firm ground. The soldiers of Narvaez had nearly all

been killed, or had been drowned, as they were loaded up with gold. Many of the horses had been killed, and all were wounded, and Diaz says "it was the greatest grief to think upon the horses and the valiant soldiers that were lost." Perhaps the horses were the greater loss, for as we know that "after God we owed the Conquest to them."

When the remains of the once powerful force, so recently enlarged by the addition of the soldiers of Narvaez's force, got to Tacuba, they entrenched themselves in a high temple. There they set up a church after that Mexico was won, called "Nuestra Señora de los Remedios," and to it used to go (and may go still) pilgrims and others in commemoration of the day.

"Food there was none" (in the temple where they were), "and it was sad to see the way we cured our wounded, tying up their wounds with the few rags we had."

As they would soon have been reduced by hunger had they stayed where they were, they set out once more on their way towards Tlascala, leaving the temple in the middle of the night, for all the day the Mexicans had kept up their attacks, yelling and shooting arrows and slinging stones and throwing their fire-hardened spears. Their retreat must have been terrible, by the account that Diaz gives.

"We carried those who were the worst wounded in the middle of the road. The lame hobbled on crutches, and some who could not walk rode on the horses that were wounded and were of no use for the fight. The horses that were sound were in the front, some upon our flank, some on the other side of the retreating force."

Diaz seems to have got himself a horse, for several times he says, "Those of us who had horses," and it is probable that Cortés, knowing his experience of Indian warfare, had given him one of the horses of the men that had been killed.

Their state was desperate, for only twenty-three horses had remained alive, most of them wounded, and every man in the whole army "had a wound." The guns and powder all were left behind, and only a few crossbows had been saved; but arrows they had none.

At last, fighting each step upon the way, they reached Tlascala and were safe, although even amongst the Tlascaltecans there were some opposed to them.

Well might the night be called "La Noche Triste," for they had lost nearly nine hundred soldiers, as well as seventy-two that had been kept to garrison a town, and five Castilian women.[1]

Of their Indian allies more than twelve hundred had been slain.

Diaz says that the men who had been with Narvaez suffered the greatest loss, because they all were loaded up with gold, and that three men from the new town upon the coast, called Villa Rica, who had come to Mexico for their share of the spoil, were killed along with them.

Diaz himself was far too wise to load himself with gold. Indeed, he seems, from all he says about himself, to have had no turn for making money.

In Tlascala, after an interval of rest, Cortés set about conquering the outlying towns, and in all that he did showed himself the resourceful captain that he was.

[1] *Mugeres de Castilla.*

Diaz takes the opportunity of once more protesting against the historians who ascribed all the honour of the Conquest to Cortés alone.

"I have said, and here I say again, that to Cortés is due all honour as a good and as a valiant captain; but, above all, we have to give God thanks, who was pleased always to assist us."

This I think Gómara and the other chroniclers whom Diaz attacks would not have controverted, especially as Gómara was himself a friar, and was not likely to have said anything against a statement such as the above.

Diaz goes on to say, much in the vein that an old soldier of Napoleon might have said, writing of Austerlitz, "After God we helped him, and we broke the squadrons of the Mexicans."

Neither Gómara, nor any other man come down from heaven, as Diaz might have said in his own rough Castilian, could possibly deny this fact, though it is obvious it does no discredit to the stout old soldier to place the fact in black and white beneath our eyes.

Here, as in a hundred places, his history breathes so true an air, and shows how much he loved the truth (as far as it had been revealed to him), that one is struck with admiration, both for the soldier and the man.

Gómara, he says, talks of more cities than there were, and puts so many thousand houses in them that his book reads like a fairy tale, for there were not more than a fifth part of the houses in the town that Gómara writes down. The Mexicans ought to have been numbered by the thousand, not by the million, and he goes on to say—

"Let careful readers look how vast the difference is between his history and mine . . . and not regard the rhetoric nor the ornament, for it is certain that his (history) is pleasanter to read than this, my rude chronicle; but truth has to supply the want of rhetoric and style."

After the rest the Spaniards had with the Tlascalans, the real work of the Conquest slowly began. Nothing more clearly shows the power of will and the grasp of affairs, civil and military, that Cortés possessed than the means by which he set about to carry out his plans.

After the fashion of all European captains either in the America of those days or in the Africa of more modern times, the first thing was to proclaim the men who had been defending their own country as traitors and rebels to their king. No doubt that Montezuma had been induced to say that he held himself the vassal of the Emperor Charles v. Still he had no real notion what his assent involved. All that the Spaniards wanted was the pretext and the false colour of the law. Once that was assured, they were enabled, just as the French, the Italians, the Spaniards, and ourselves have done to-day in Africa, to represent themselves as acting legally.

The law, as all men know, or must know if they would be honest[1] with themselves, is too often but a system framed to quiet the conscience of the strong when they ill-treat the weak. So Cortés in his second letter to the Emperor Charles v. has the following: "In a certain portion of this province (Tepeaca) they killed

[1] A vain hope, for at least ten centuries to come.

ten Spaniards, for the inhabitants are very warlike and rebellious . . . there I made certain slaves, of whom I gave the fifth part to the officials of your Majesty, also besides having killed the aforesaid Spaniards and rebelled against your Highness they eat human flesh[1] . . . and also I was moved to make the aforesaid slaves, to terrify the men of Cuba, and because there are so many people here that if I did not chastise them thoroughly and cruelly they would never mend their ways."

The letter reads so "modern"[2] that it might have come from any general of any European army in any part of Africa to-day. Cortés had some excuse for his brutality. He came from a nation that had only just emerged from a war for its existence, that had lasted more than eight hundred years. The times were rougher than our own, not perhaps more bloodthirsty (that were impossible), but less mealy-mouthed. He was far from home, and ships took months to bring out reinforcements, and, as he says himself, the people of the land were very numerous. In his case, as in the case of Christian generals to-day, the motive-power was fear.

Diaz does not seem to have liked the system of the marking of the slaves, like cattle, with a G.[3] In fact, he was for a man of those times a humanitarian. He

[1] This eating of human flesh Cortés and other conquerors drag out on every occasion when they are going to commit some villainy, just as the cry of "White women in danger" is used as an excuse for any barbarity in South Africa to-day.

[2] "Modern" seems to mean "contemporary," and thus all writing has been "modern" once, and becomes antiquated as soon as the ink is dry.

[3] G. stood for *Guerra*, so that the slaves were marked as captives of the bow and spear.

tells us that after the death of Montezuma the Mexicans set up a prince called Guatemuz, as king; that he was five-and-twenty years of age and handsome for an Indian,[1] and was married to one of Montezuma's daughters, who also was a very handsome woman . . . for an Indian.

Guatemuz was a brave and single-minded man, and if it had been written that his country could be saved, he was the man to save it; but the internal quarrels of the different tribes rendered it as easy to subdue as were both Tripoli and Morocco in these latter days.

Diaz follows all the advances toward Mexico minutely; but he does better, for he records hundreds of little circumstances that enable us to reconstruct, not only his own character, but that of the whole time; for example, one Captain Camargo, who had been a friar, arrived from Panuco with some sixty soldiers; but all, as Diaz says, " ailing and with their stomachs swollen either by drinking water from the swamps or from bad food, so that we called them all, the Green Bellies."[2] These soldiers' jokes and sayings, for an historian of mankind, are of ten times the value of military movements now long since obsolete, and which even when they were just evolved must have made but dull reading for the uninitiated.

Diaz, who always attached himself to Sandoval, appears to have been much mortified that a wound kept him from going on the expedition that that captain made to Xalacingo, for they returned with a good booty

[1] *Gentil hombre para ser Indio.*
[2] *Pusimos por nombre Los Panzaverdetes.*

composed of women and of boys, whom they marked with a red-hot iron, for slaves.

"I," Diaz says, "was ill with fever, and spitting blood, but, praise to God, I soon got well again, for I was bled two or three times."

Bleeding was the usual remedy for everything in the Spain of those days; but Diaz must have had a constitution made of steel to stand it, though reduced by fever and by spitting blood. The foolish custom then prevailed, just as it does to-day, of changing native names to others that the conquerors thought more fitting for the place. Thus Cocotlan was changed to Castil-Blanco, a name not ugly in itself, but probably just as well fitted to a hundred other little, white towns perched up upon a crag.

At this point of his history, Diaz, who wrote to rescue from oblivion the names of his obscure companions, breaks off with one of his digressions. He tells us that Cortés wrote to his wife, Dona Catalina Juarez La Marcayda.[1] He also wrote for provisions for his troops. The said provisions were composed of maize and salted dogs, with a few chickens, which, Diaz says, were all that could be had.

Many of those who had come with Narvaez now returned, and with them "one Maldonado, a native of Medellin, who was sick at the time. This was not that Maldonado, who was the husband of Maria del Rincón, nor yet Fat Maldonado, nor the other that we called Albaro Maldonado, the Ugly, he who was married to a lady called Maria Arias."

[1] I can find no explication of this designation "La Marcayda," or if it was a nickname, or how it arose.

The names of all these Maldonados and a hundred soldiers more are preserved by Diaz in his *True History* with almost pious care, and certainly his solicitude for their memory does honour both to his recollection and his heart.

Cortés had profited by his experience of the "Noche Triste," and now saw clearly that to gain Mexico he must first command the lakes. So he set about to build twelve little sailing-boats, to which Diaz gives the name of brigantines. They were built chiefly by the Tlascaltecan Indians, under the direction of four sailors whom Cortés had taken from the fleet. Diaz breaks off after telling of the building of this fleet of brigantines to tell us of one Monjaraz from Biscay, and of another Monjaraz called Andrew, and of another called Gregorio. The last was father of a lady whom we called la Monjaraza, who was a very pretty girl. All these digressions really give value to his book, for it must be taken as a whole, and read not only as an account of what the author writes about, but as the history of a man's mind.

About a year had passed since Diaz and the other Spaniards had been driven out of Mexico.

On the day after Christmas Day they left Tlascala and advanced towards their prey. Cortés had asked the caciques of the place for ten thousand Indians to accompany his troops; but it seems likely that nearly twenty thousand marched with them. When they once more saw Mexico, with its white houses looking like swans floating upon the waters of the lake, Diaz says that they remembered their defeat, and prayed to God to give them better luck in this their second venture on the place. So may a pious burglar, grasping his

jemmy in his hand turn his eyes heavenwards just as he tops the garden wall and sees the surburban villa, backed by its shrubbery, and with the lawn flowing up to the unguarded door.

Deceived, or half-deceived by friendly messages, the army stopped at Tezcuco, a town of more than thirty thousand souls. The chief having fled to Mexico, Cortés quite naturally set up another, who in this case happened to be a boy. Naturally the boy became a Christian, and was received into the Church with the solemnity befitting to a prince. One, "Antonio de Villareal, the husband of a handsome lady called Isabel de Ojeda, was named his tutor." A bachelor[1] (of laws) called Escobar was appointed captain of Tezcuco. Orders were given that no Mexican should be allowed access to the newly baptized prince, who was called Hernando, after his conqueror.

Not content with these precautions against the deadly microbe of patriotism, Cortés appointed as an extra tutor "a good soldier called Pedro Sanchez Farfan, who was the husband of the good and virtuous lady, Maria de Estrada." These efforts to civilise the young prince were naturally not without ulterior aims.

The brigantines had to be built where there was wood at hand, and as they had no carts for transport, the only way to get the vessels to the lake was by constructing a canal.

The authority of the young prince was required to

[1] Cortés himself was a lawyer by profession. In his case the toga had to give way to the sword, as it happened to several of the *Conquistadores*. Legaspi, the conqueror of the Philippines, was also a lawyer.

make his subjects work. Certainly they seem to have done so with goodwill, and Diaz says that every day seven or eight thousand of them were working in the ditch.

Little by little the Spaniards advanced, conquering town after town, and in each skirmish and assault we may be sure that Diaz played his part, for if for any reason, either because of illness or of wound, he was prevented from going with the expedition, he always says so with regret. It is impossible not to admire the courage and determination of Cortés and all his followers ; but, at the same time, for all their numbers and their valour, the Mexicans were as helpless as a flock of sheep before a pack of wolves. For all that, now and then the Spaniards had serious reverses, and Diaz tells of one that happened in the province of Chalco, to which place he had sent Sandoval to get more wood to build the brigantines. There in a temple in which were many idols they found the walls splashed with the blood of many Spaniards who had been sacrificed. They also found two heads cured and well stuffed with straw, with their beards still adhering to them, and besides four skins of horses, tanned, and with the shoes still nailed upon their feet, and clothes of many men who had been killed, hanging up as offerings to their gods.

What must have stirred them most was to read on the wall, written with a piece of charcoal, " Here was a prisoner, the unfortunate Juan Yuste, with many others in his company."

That, indeed, must have moved them, as it moves a frontiersman to find the body of a friend naked and

mutilated, and pierced with arrow wounds. Sometimes in Arizona or in Texas the Apaches would drag a body thus mutilated and leave it in the middle of a trail where travellers were bound to come upon it festering in the sun, as they toiled up a rocky trail, leading their horses, and with a Winchester held ready in their hands.

# CHAPTER X

As the Spaniards strove to complete the brigantines with all the speed they could, so did the Mexicans strive to destroy them on the stocks, knowing once the lake was dominated by them that Mexico must fall. Three times they tried to burn them; but still the Spaniards toiled at their task, and still Cortés advanced, conquering town after town. Inside the city the preparation for defence was ceaseless and men and women worked at feathering arrows, preparing stones for slinging, and hardening javelins in the fire.

As they had taken many swords from the Spaniards whom they had slain in their retreat, they set them up on to long poles, and they proved serviceable enough to them, for in the battles that ensued it was by means of them they killed so many horses, lancing them from the canoes.

The perpetual fighting and the fierce resistance of the Mexicans made many gaps amongst the Spaniards, and Diaz tells with what delight they welcomed several recruits who happened at that moment to arrive from Cuba in a ship.

In the ship came, as treasurer for Charles v., one Julian de Aldrete, and a Franciscan friar, Pedro Melgarejo de Urrea. The Emperor, always a penurious man, never did anything at all to help his subjects in

America, unless the sending of a treasurer can be described as help. The friar brought with him a stock of papal bulls, and did a thriving and a brisk trade in them, so much so that in a few months he returned home rich.

Diaz says, with a touch of humour, "With them (the bulls) he put us right if we had anything upon our consciences during the wars in which we were engaged." It is most likely that their consciences were either pretty fairly charged, or else extremely tender, for the bulls went off like corn-plaisters at a fair.

As all the important positions had been fortified, Cortés was forced to take them one by one. None gave him greater trouble than a hill which Diaz calls El Peñol (El Peñon), not far from Chimaluacan, close to the road towards the lakes. This fort was on their way, so that Cortés could not well leave it, full of men, upon his rear.

Diaz on this occasion gives one of those rare glimpses of a man, seen by himself after the lapse of years and judged dispassionately. "As we began to scale El Peñol, the Indian warriors who were on the top hurled stones and boulders at us.

"It was a wonder when one saw them bounding down the slope that we were not all slain. It was not a well-judged order for a captain to have sent us up there." This is one of the times that Diaz takes upon himself to criticise Cortés. As far as we can see, it looks as if his criticism was judicious, for little was to be gained except hard knocks, and men were precious at such a fearful distance from their base. "Just at my feet was killed a soldier, one Martinez Valenciano, who had been

master of the ceremonies to a noble in Castille. He had a helmet on, and as he fell he did not say a word; but still we scrambled up.

"As the greyhounds (for so we called the stones) came rolling down and bounding, in a short time were killed two other soldiers. One was called Gaspar Sanchez, nephew of the treasurer of Cuba, and there was one called Bravo; but still we scrambled on. The next to fall was a brave soldier who was called Alonso Rodriguez; then two more were severely wounded in the head; but still we stuck to it.

"I, who in those days was a light and active man, stuck close to Ensign Corral, and we advanced taking advantage of some hollows in the sides of El Peñol, creeping from one hole to another, and by good luck I found some shelter which helped me greatly in my task. Our Ensign, Cristóbal del Corral, was sheltering behind some thick and very thorny trees, for he was wounded, and his blood was running down his face. He said, 'Look here, Señor Bernal Diaz del Castillo, it seems impossible for us to go on farther; look out that one of these great greyhounds does not get hold of you, and keep quiet in the hollow where you are; for we could hardly help ourselves upon the slope by hanging on (to bushes and to rocks), much less get farther up the hill.'

"Just at that moment I observed that Pedro Barba had arrived, creeping from one depression to another just as the Ensign and as I had done. This Barba was a captain of crossbowmen, and he brought two of his men along with him, so I said to him from a little higher than the place that he had reached, 'Oh, Señor Capitan, don't go any higher, for it is so steep you are

in danger of a fall.' When I said this to him, he answered, to show how brave he was, or to show what a fine man he thought himself, that 'talking was no good, and what we had to do was to still stick to it.'

"This answer I took as a reproach, and so I answered him, 'Let us see if you can get to where I am standing,' and as I spoke I scrambled up a step or two. Just as I spoke they launched some boulders that they had been keeping in reserve, and wounded Pedro Barba and killed one of his men. These stones passed only a yard away from where I stood, but did not injure me. Then Ensign Corral shouted to us that we should pass the word down to Cortés that to advance was quite impossible, and even to come down was dangerous.

"When Cortés understood this, for he stood upon the plain and could not see what was going on upon the slopes of El Peñol; but even then he had had three soldiers killed and seven wounded by the boulders bounding down the hill, he thought that all of us were killed, or badly wounded at the least. . . . Then half by signs and half by shouting and by firing off some guns, we understood that we had orders to retire. So in good order, and sheltering ourselves in every little hollow that we found, we all got down again, most of us wounded and with blood dripping from our wounds, our flags all torn, and with eight soldiers killed."

Altogether a pretty little fight, and described by Diaz just as a reporter might describe a fight to-day, or as he would have done in the halcyon days when a reporter was allowed to come within ten miles of the fighting line.

From the description we may see that Diaz was a

man who put his honour (as he saw it) higher than his life, and that the captain of the crossbowmen was the kind of fool that is abundant in every army in the world.

In fact, Diaz was always ready to quarrel with anyone upon the point of honour, for next day, at the attack upon another fort, he had high words with Captain Pedro de Ircio about some booty which Diaz had loaded on his slaves. So hot did they become that Cortés had to interfere, and it appears rebuked them both.

The army then advanced to Coadalbaca,[1] where they had to cross a stream. The Mexicans were there in force, and as the bridge was nearly broken down the passage was a dangerous feat of arms. The only way to pass was on some trees which overhung the bank or had fallen across the stream, Diaz does not say which; but, anyhow, a soldier broke his leg in passing over them. "Still we passed over, though at considerable risk (although I say it of myself), and when upon the other side I saw how bad it was to pass and perilous, so bad that when I looked at it my head began to swim; but still I did get over it and twenty soldiers after me and many Indians."

From this time Bernal Diaz stands out more clearly from the *mare magnum* of his own history as a personage. Perhaps the experience that he had gained brought him into more immediate contact with Cortés. At any rate, he tells us more of his own exploits; but always modestly, though with the sense of his own value, that befits a man who felt that he was somebody and to be reckoned with. In the next expedition, for

[1] Now called Cuernavaca.

example, against Suchimelco, as he had received no orders to accompany certain captains,[1] he took the resolution to depart and join them, but taking care not to be seen by his superiors.

"I took," he says, "three Naborias[2] of mine from men from Tlascala, strong active Indians, and I went after them (the captains) till they saw me coming and waited for me in order to turn me back . . . but I stuck out to go with them; and as Christobal de Oli was a great friend of mine, he told me I might go, but that I should prepare my hands for fighting and my feet to help me to escape." This he said for Diaz had no horse, and they were mounted.

The army had been suffering from want of water, and an old soldier had just died of thirst. It appears that the chief reason Diaz had for "putting his life in peril," as he says, was to get water, for he goes on to say: "Half a league farther on there were many houses and dwellings of the men of Suchimelco upon the same rising ground.

"Then the men on horseback went off to search for water in these houses, and drank their fill of it. One of the Tlascaltecas brought me from the house a great jar of water . . . from which I filled myself and them (the Naborias), and then I determined to go back to where Cortés was resting, because the dwellers in the houses began to gather and to shout at us. So I brought in the jar of water by the hands of the Tlascalans, and found Cortés, who had just begun to start with all his

[1] "Christobal de Oli, one Valdenebro and Pedro Gonzalez of Truxillo, and other valiant men."

[2] The name Naboria was used of Indians who served the Spaniards, but not as slaves.

men. So I told him that there was water in some houses close at hand, and that I had drunk my fill and had brought water with me in a jar. This jar my Indians carried concealed, for fear that someone would take it from them; for before thirst there is no law."

This is a phrase that only a simple man such as was Diaz, or a great artist, could possibly have penned. It contains everything; but at the same time is almost nothing in itself. Your modern writer about war, especially if he is conscient of what he writes—perhaps the worst fault that a writer possibly can have—usually loads up such a description till one is nearly sick with listening to him, listening to himself.

Diaz goes on to say: "Cortés and the other gentlemen drank and were refreshed and joyful, and then made haste to march."

The Spaniards now were within two or three leagues of the capital; for Suchimelco, Cugoacimi, Cholimilobosco, Iztalapalapa, Coadlavaca, and Mezquique, all towns that Diaz mentions, each had its long paved road that led right through the lakes to Mexico. As they advanced by way of Suchimelco, the fighting became more desperate with each step that they took. On the same day "of the great thirst," Cortés had the first of his escapes from being carried off alive for sacrifice.

He rode, as chance would have it, on that day "a good, dark-brown horse called 'el Romo' (from its Roman nose). This horse, either because it was too fat or tired, as it had but little exercise, suddenly failed him. The enemy, who was in force, seized hold of Cortés and dragged him to the ground." He would have lost his

life had not some Tlascaltecan Indians, Christobal de Olea, a native of Old Castile, whose birthplace was Medina del Campo,[1] rushed to his aid and set him on his horse, though badly wounded in the head. Olea himself was also badly wounded. Still both would have been killed had not Pedro de Alvarado and Andres de Tapia with Christobal de Oli and others come to their aid. Although they came, they passed, as Diaz puts it, "through a little too much of spears and arrows and stones slung from a sling." Each had his wound. Oli was bathed in blood, and Alvarado's horse was wounded. There is something both intimate and Homeric in the way Diaz describes these fights, and by degrees one gets to know Christobal de Oli, Pedro de Alvarado, and some other of the captains, far better than one can ever know one's friends.

The fleet of Indian canoes with which the lake was covered did the Spaniards more damage in their various fights than the land forces of the Mexicans, for as the fighting all went on upon high causeways in the water, the Indians killed the horses with their long lances, and the Spaniards, huddled together on the narrow roads, were exposed ceaselessly to showers of arrows and of stones. Half a league after the skirmish in which Cortés had such a near escape from being carried off, they once more saw the high temples and the palaces of Mexico after a year of constant war and of intrigue.

It must have been a strange experience for them all

[1] As Medina del Campo was also the native place of Bernal Diaz, and as most of the other conquerors came from Estremadura, Diaz relates this feat of arms with some complacency.

to find themselves again in sight of the mysterious city in which they had been received almost as gods, and out of which they had been kicked like thieves.

Cortés especially was sad when he thought about the friends that he had lost, the treasure and the prestige of his arms.

Diaz says that he and the whole army stood and gazed intently at the city, and remained, as it were, fascinated for some considerable time. Cortés sat down, overcome by his feelings, upon a stone and sighed.

A certain soldier, one Alonso Perez, who was bachelor (perhaps of arts or of some other mystery, for he is styled "el Bachiller"), said to him, "Sir Captain, do not be cast down, for in the wars these kind of things are sure to happen now and then."

Whether this consoled him we are not told, but someone who had at least an acquaintanceship with letters paraphrased an old ballad[1] and applied it to him, which, as he was a verse-maker himself, possibly had more effect with him. From where they first saw Mexico they marched on to Tezcuco, into which they entered towards the end of April 1521. The Spaniards were now in sight of their goal, and those who had survived the disastrous retreat pointed out, so Diaz says, and we may well believe him, the positions that they had occupied a year ago. As they had been so many months in Mexico, they had begun to call several of the places and the

[1] "En Tacuba esta Cortés
Con su esquadron esforzado
Fairte estaba y muy penoso
Triste y con gran cuidado
La una mano en la mexilla
La otra en el costado."

streets by names of their own invention, such as the "Street of the Serpents," and the like. The treasurer and the various officers sent by the Emperor to help in the re-conquest (for nothing helps a fighting force so much as several good tax-collectors) gazed in astonishment at the city rising from the lake. Then, as to-day, there must have been a sort of Eastern air over the city, for Diaz tells us that the buildings were all white, and that great clumps of palms stood here and there. The wealth of vegetation and the waters of the lake, the white volcanoes in the distance, and the clear air of the great plateau, inevitably reminded all the soldiers of their native land. Well did they name the country, "The New Spain."

Atmosphere, sky, and the bright red soil recall to-day many a place either in Estremadura or Castile.

Just as they were about to advance to seize their prey (for nothing stood between the Spaniards and the city, but the Mexicans, a negligible quantity, for Providence clearly never intended anyone to hold anything but by sheer force of arms) a conspiracy broke out which nearly ruined the whole conquest and Cortés. The soldiers who had been taken prisoners when Narvaez failed in his attempt had never been well affected to Cortés, and most of them were anxious to return to Cuba, where they had their homes. Several of the officers under a captain, Antonio de Villafaña, had agreed to stab Cortés and all his principal adherents, such as Christobal de Oli, Pedro de Alvarado, and others, and to set up another general. By the grace of God (according to Bernal Diaz), the plot was discovered, and Cortés,

not wishing to make too great a scandal, after he had confessed with Father Juan Diaz, hung the captain from an iron bar in the window of his room.

It was said commonly throughout the army that Villafaña had a list of the chief actors in the would-be plot; but that as soon as he was caught he swallowed it to save their lives.

From this time Cortés had a bodyguard in which Bernal Diaz served and so gradually became one of his humble friends. When these little matters were all settled up, there remained a quantity of Indian captives to be shared out amongst the men. Cortés carefully put aside a certain number to be branded as slaves for the Emperor (Charles v.) and took a portion of them for himself, reserving thirty of the youngest girls for his chief captains. Diaz says that of those who were left some were young and pretty girls, and that he and others went by night and stole them, so that they should not be disfigured by the brand. So in this mysterious way the Christian virtues of kindliness and charity were performed. All was now ready for a start, and the Indians of the subject towns having brought in their quota of arrow-heads and crossbow bolts, which Cortés had laid upon each town according to its ability, the expedition was prepared for the advance on Mexico.

Cortés held a review on the "second day of the Holy Spirit of the year 1521" and counted all his men.

He found he had eighty-four mounted men and six hundred and fifty soldiers, armed with bucklers and with swords (some of them had lances), and one hundred and ninety-four crossbowmen and harquebusiers. Not a great force with which to attack so large a city as was

Mexico; but enough, as it turned out. Besides all these there was a large contingent of Tlascalans who scoured the country and brought in supplies. By this time all the brigantines were built, and the long trench more than half a league in length was open, right down to the lake. Without the brigantines there would have been no chance of taking Mexico, as where the lake was open to the besieged both reinforcements and supplies could always be brought in.

From his small force Cortés had to take crews to man his thirteen ships. Each one had twelve crossbowmen in it and twelve rowers, so that nearly one-half of the whole force had to be detached.

Then, being a good Christian (on all four sides[1]), he published a long proclamation, of which the first paragraph is the most interesting to men of modern times. It ran as follows: "Firstly, that no one should blaspheme our Lord Jesus Christ, his Holy Mother, our blessed Lady, nor any of the Holy Apostles or other Saints, under grave pains and penalties." Those who do not know Spanish soldiers may wonder at this clause, seeing that all of them were pious Catholics. However, familiarity, if it does not always breed contempt, at least begets a sort of fellowship, and those to whom the Spanish peasants pray, often come in for as much blasphemy as do their mules when the latter shirk the collar, or the Saints turn a deaf ear to unreasonable complaints. The other clauses, men just such as Lord Kitchener, might have put out before Khartoum, or Sir George White, at Ladysmith.

[1] The expression was *Cristiano por los quatro costados*, *i.e.* with no admixture of Jewish or Moorish blood.

A characteristic difficulty arose when the rowers were to be chosen out. As there were not many of the soldiers who could row, the captains had to find out who were fishermen and from what towns they came. Some were found out to be from Palos or Moguer Triana or El Puerto, and these Cortés obliged to row, although some of them sought to be excused upon the plea that they were gentlemen.[1]

For captains of the brigantines were named Garci-Holguin, Pedro Barba, Juan de Limpias, Carvajal el Sordo (the deaf), Juan Xaramillo, Geronimo Ruiz de la Mota and Carvajal his friend, "he who is now a very old man and lives in the street of San Francisco,"[2] and one Portillo, a good soldier who had a handsome wife. This is a detail that Bernal Diaz never failed to notice when it was noticeable.

When the review of the Castilian soldiers was over, the Tlascaltecans all advanced. They numbered fifty thousand.[3] These misguided men advanced calling out, "Long live the Emperor our Lord, Castile, Castile, Tlascala, Tlascala." In fact, a band of hands uppers, such as we had in Scotland under Baliol, and who throughout the history of the world seem to have sprung up, just as a mushroom rises out of dung.

[1] *Y aunque mas hidalgos que dixesen que eran, les hizó ir á remar.*

[2] Diaz does not say in what city, but I suppose it must have been in Guatemala.

[3] *Cincuenta mil Tlascaltecas*, Cortés, Letter iii.

## CHAPTER XI

The first thing that the Spaniards had to do in order to reduce the city was to cut off the water, which came, as it still does, from near Chapultepec.[1]

Diaz went on the expedition, and he says: "As there were several bad bits of road, they took the opportunity to shoot their arrows and throw spears and stones at us, wounding three of our men." The experience was not novel to him, and he recalls it just as a modern traveller might say, "There were a fearful lot of mosquitoes, or of flies, in the place where we slept."

The Spaniards cut the water-pipes, and "from that time no water entered the city from that place."

Diaz seems to have been encouraged by his exploit to push a little farther on, for he and others "went along the Tacuba road to see if we could take a bridge."

The Mexicans were on the look-out, and at the first discharge they wounded thirty of his men. What Cortés thought of his adventure he neglects to say; but as it brought about a general engagement in the

[1] Diaz spells the word Chalputepeque. This may have been more like the Mexican pronunciation than is the modern spelling of the word. Again, it merely may have been one of those nice derangements of consonants to which uneducated Spaniards are prone, as *catredal* for *catedral*, *estogamo* for *estomago*, and others, often to be heard.

attempt to bring him off, most probably he heard about it in good Castilian of the most vigorous kind.

As all the roads were fortified, and bridges crossed them everywhere to allow free passage for the canoes about the lake, they had to take each bridge on their advance towards the town. When they were masters of a bridge they filled it up, to stop the passage of canoes; but when the night came on, as they could not sleep so far removed from the main camp, the Mexicans came down in hundreds and soon had it clear again.

The cavalry, which hitherto had been their stand-by, was of little use upon the high, paved roads on which they had to fight. Arrows and spears from the canoes rained on them as they stood exposed, and Diaz says their riders did not care much to advance, as in those days a horse was worth a thousand dollars, and if he happened to be killed, money was useless, as there were no more (horses) in the land."

So they fought on, advancing doggedly; and after nightfall round the fires they dressed their wounds with oil, and "a soldier called Juan Catalan made the sign of the cross and charmed them, and I say verily that our Lord Jesus Christ vouchsafed us many blessings . . . and our wounds soon healed." Whether the oil or the charms of Juan Catalan were more effectual, Diaz neglects to tell us, but probably in both the cases faith played the greater part.

In the morning, stiff, tired, and with their wounds bound up in dirty rags, they had to set out once more to attack the enemy, for "if the wounded had all remained in camp, no captain would have had more than

a handful with him in the fight." The Tlascala Indians, who by degrees were getting civilised, all came in shoals to Juan Catalan for him to charm their wounds. In fact, so many of them came that he did little else all day.

One sees him sitting in the shade, his sword beside him and his helmet on the ground, sunburned and war-stained, and the wondering Indians coming before him each in his turn like schoolboys going up for prizes, or like a string of unemployed waiting outside a soup kitchen, for him to charm their wounds. As it is probable their faith was quite as strong as that of Mary Magdalene, their wounds no doubt were healed more quickly than those of the Spaniards, whose case occasionally must have been retarded by faint glimmerings of common sense, a quality inimical to the success of doctors such as was Juan Catalan.

Captains and ensigns and the rest all fought with their wounds bandaged, "and I say that every day we had to get another ensign to lead us on and to hold up the flag. . . . Luckily, we had enough to eat, for I say that there was no lack of cakes of maize;[1] but we had nothing for our wounds, no, not a thing, confound it! . . . What put some life in us were some *quilites*, which are a kind of herb the Indians eat, and cherries of that land."

[1] *Tortillas de maiz.* These are cakes made of maize, with the flour pounded on a stone called a *metate.* They are heavy, but sustaining, and form the bread of all poor Mexicans. In country districts wheaten bread is never seen—so little, that once I gave a crust I had with me in the bottom of my saddle-bags to an old woman in a hut upon the plains. She signed it with the cross, dipped it in water (for it was like a stone), and after eating it almost devoutly, thanked me and said, "*El pan es muy decente,*" which may be rendered, "What a fine thing is bread."

Diaz interpolates his recollections of the details of his daily life and weaves them into the main body of his history, just as a silver thread runs through a piece of stuff, and though it seems to have no part or parcel with the rest, still makes the fabric gay and interesting.

In any other man such details would seem impertinent. In him they serve to show that every detail of our lives has its significance. Throughout the first part of the siege Diaz served in the camp of Alvarado, and seems to have been in the forefront of everything. The Spaniards advanced, taking the bridges one by one, filling them up and leaving guards to stop the Mexicans from opening them again. Upon the lake the brigantines fought ceaselessly with fleets of canoes, and on the causeways arrows and stones and spears rained on the soldiers as they stood exposed, killing and wounding many of them. Each evening the main body had to return to camp, as to sleep on the causeways would have been to risk a massacre. Still guards had to be left at every bridge, and in this perilous service Diaz often was employed. He tells us of his terrors in the night, when in the darkness the barefooted Indians stole up almost to the post, or in canoes with muffled paddles, shot at a venture at the camp. Such situations try men's nerves even more than open warfare, and he relates with pride how many times he was employed in service at the posts. All the negotiations that Cortés established either for peace or for surrender of the city upon terms, proved fruitless; and even had the Spaniards thought about retreat, no way was open to them, for at the first sign of their wavering the Indians that they had left behind them

would all have risen, and not a Spaniard would have survived to reach the coast.

"Well do I understand," says Diaz, "that my careful readers will be sick of reading of so many fights, but I cannot do otherwise than mention them, for we were three-and-ninety days before the city, and every day we had a fight." He promises, however, to abridge as much as possible, for, as he says, if he does not do so, his history will read like the *Amadis* and other books of chivalry, and be a never-ending tale.

Would that not a few historians would be as merciful, for seldom do they spare their curious readers one atom of their tediousness. Although he does not say so, as he belonged to the guard that had been formed to watch over Cortés, Diaz must have been one of those[1] who threw themselves so bravely into the middle of the enemy to save Cortés from being carried off alive. Had they not done so, Cortés would have been sacrificed at once, as was his major-domo, Cristobal de Guzman, who brought him a fresh horse when he was wounded, and had been seized by a band of Mexicans.

Several of his immediate followers lost their lives in rescuing him, and the whole army had to retreat upon the camp. Five heads of slaughtered Spaniards were thrown into the camp, and as the Mexicans affirmed that they had slain Cortés and Sandoval, the Tlascaltecans were all seized with panic, and many of them deserted and went home.

At this conjuncture the Spaniards seem to have

[1] *Acudieron muchos soldados.*

got into a sort of backwater, and with the instinctive feeling of the artist (perhaps not reasoned out but felt), Diaz introduces one of his most characteristic and most vivid passages: "As we were falling back upon the camp, the drum upon the great temple where were the idols Huichilobos and Tezcatepuca began to sound.[1] The temple dominated the whole city, and from it they beat a drum that had a melancholy sound as it had been a drum of devils, and it resounded over the whole country to the distance of three leagues. At the same time we heard the sound of kettle-drums, and we heard afterwards that they were offering ten hearts together with the blood of our poor comrades to their accursed gods."

The melancholy sound of the great drum seems to have impressed him greatly, and no doubt under the circumstances, and with the knowledge that their comrades had been sacrificed, it must have sounded like a knell. As one reads what he writes, little by little one forgets that after all the Spaniards, with Cortés, Bernal Diaz, and Sandoval, were but a band of pirates; for the unconscious art with which the tale is told interests one, against one's reason, in their fate. Had but a Mexican written upon the other side, the account no doubt would have been as different as that of

[1] This temple, known as the Great Teocalli, *i.e.* the House of God, was dedicated to the god of war. In it the Mexicans made their last stand. The writer on the Conquest known as the "Anonymous Conqueror," a gentleman who accompanied Cortés, made a sketch of this temple. His writings are preserved in the collection of Ramnusio's *Voyages*, and are of great interest. He was a man of far greater education and of much less natural talent than was Bernal Diaz. There is a copy of his sketch in Ramnusio and also in Father Kircher's *Ædipus Ægyptiacus*.

Barbour in his *Bruce*, from the official chronicler of the English king.

Diaz lays the blame of the reverse upon Cortés, who, he says, followed up his first success too rashly, and forgot to fill in all the bridges over which he passed, so as to leave himself dry land for his retreat, if it were necessary. After the fashion of most men in a subordinate position, he indemnifies himself when the chance arises by launching out into criticism. Often enough his criticisms are to the point. In this case he is clearly in the wrong, and Cortés himself recounts the check, only remarking that it was one of those disasters which must come now and then to everybody, whereas Diaz affirms he threw the blame upon his treasurer, Julian de Alderete, for his neglect in carrying out his plans.

On the same day Diaz was wounded by an arrow as he stood up to the waist in water fighting with the Indians in canoes. He never makes much account of any of his wounds, but sets them down just as he sets down any other detail of his life. As they were struggling on the causeway on the evening of the same day, once more the melancholy sounding drum was beaten on the great temple, and from a platform high up upon the building came the noise of cymbals and of horns. When they looked up they saw a sight which, fighting as they were against great odds, must have made their blood run cold and sent a chill deep down into their hearts. Ten or twelve Spaniards were driven up with blows and kicks before the statue of the great god of war called Huichilobos; feathers were stuck upon their heads, and then, with

blows from instruments like flails,[1] they made them dance before the idols. After they had danced they threw them down and cut their hearts out with sharp knives made of flints, and offered them before the statues of their gods.

The Indians kicked their bodies down the temple steps to where the butchers stood, who cut them up like sheep. Their flesh was eaten, stewed with red pepper,[2] at a banquet, and the wild beasts devoured their entrails. "These cruelties all of us saw from our own camp. . . . The careful reader may imagine for himself how it affected us and how each one of us gave thanks to God that he had not been carried off that day and sacrificed."[3]

Diaz recounts with pride, and with a modesty which in a way is sublimated pride, that Sandoval had mentioned to Cortés how he had found him fighting valiantly up to his waist in water with the Indians in canoes. "And as he praised me highly, I will not write down what he said, for other men have told it and the whole camp was well aware of it."

Both sides by this time were almost worn out, and the Spaniards were obliged to remain quiet in their camp for the next five days, and in the city the Mexicans prepared for a last stand. All the four days the "accursed drum" sounded its melancholy

[1] *Unos como aventadores.* These *aventadores* may have been flails, or hay forks, which in Spain are always made of wood.

[2] *Se comian las carnes con chilmole. Chile con carne*—that is, meat stewed with chiles—is a common dish in Mexico to-day.

[3] The "Anonymous Conqueror" says that the great idol Huichilobos was made of all kinds of seeds pasted together with human blood.

notes from the great temple, and every night bonfires were lighted, round which the miserable Spanish captives were led out to sacrifice. However, Mexico was doomed, and even the great force of warriors which was shut up inside its walls combined to make its fall more certain, for by degrees all food began to fail, and all the water that they had to drink was brackish, for they took it from the lake.

The brigantines stopped all canoes from entering with provisions, and by degrees the Spaniards advanced, taking the bridges one by one, and filling up all the canals, so that, as Diaz says, that which was water was turned into dry land.

It is impossible not to be sorry for the wretched Mexicans, who fought most desperately in defence of their own homes. When one remembers that the Spaniards came upon them, as it were, from another planet, with arms of which they had had no previous idea, and animals that seemed terrific to them, the defence they made was as heroic as that made by any people of the world. In some respects it was the most heroic ever made, for almost every other nation had some idea beforehand of its assailants, and thus fought upon better terms.

As the end drew near, Cortés, who seems to have been a little moved towards compassion, or perhaps admired their gallantry, sent several times to try and get the Mexicans to surrender upon terms. Their young king and commander, Guatemuz, rejected every overture, swearing that he would put to death all who should talk of peace.

Cortés himself says in his third letter to the Emperor,

"It was a pity to see so many houses pulled down and burned; but it was impossible for us not to act thus." . . . He goes on to quote a saying of the Mexicans, for by this time the outposts were so near to one another that the sentries talked to each other as they stood to arms. The saying gives one some idea of the spirit that animated those who were making such a gallant fight. They said "that we should go on burning and destroying, for they would make us build up everything again if they were victors . . . and if not, that they would have to build up all again for us."

Few sayings that history has preserved of men in a like position to themselves are more heroic, and it is to the credit of Cortés that he had as much imagination as to write them down. As the Spaniards advanced, filling up the canals, destroying houses, and generally acting as pioneers of progress and of the Christian faith, in certain temples that they took they found the heads of Spanish prisoners, with the skin tanned and the skulls filled with hay. This sight "made the tears start from our eyes," Diaz tells us, and no doubt that is true enough, for I have seen a hardy frontiersman shed tears over the body of a comrade which we had come upon, horribly mutilated, on an Indian trail.

Naturally Diaz, the frontiersman, myself, or even you, "oh, curious reader," would have shed tears in the like circumstances, for all we should have seen would have been the bodies of our friends, and naturally we should not have sat down to moralise upon the fact that they had lost their lives in their ardour to possess themselves of other people's land.

So in evictions in the west of Ireland a process-server's man has been observed to let the salt tears fall, when from a cottage roof an iron pot has crashed upon the skull of one of those who were engaged in tearing down the thatch.

On the last day of fighting, when even to look at the wretched Mexicans, as Cortés himself says in his third letter, was terrible, so wasted and so miserable they had become with famine, Diaz did not go under the command of his especial friend, Sandoval, but was attached to the person of his general. Everything pointed to the fact that the city could not hold out many days. The fighting all was over, and it behoved the Spaniards to see that Guatemuz did not escape. Their brigantines patrolled the lake. Cortés himself ascended to the top of the great temple,[1] with all his captains.

Suddenly they saw a fleet of large canoes sally out hastily. The brigantines gave chase, and soon came up with them. In the largest were Guatemuz and all his family. Seeing that he could not escape, he stood up and said, "Do not fire. I am the King of Mexico, and all I ask is that you respect my wife and children and all the women who are with me in the canoe, and that you take me to Cortés."

Holguin, who was the captain of the fastest of the brigantines, courteously helped him and his wife aboard, and also twenty chiefs who were with him.

When the boat drew near, Cortés had a seat of honour hurriedly prepared with mats and blankets, and

[1] Upon its site now stands the Cathedral, with the Aztec Calendar built into one of the walls.

received his prisoner courteously, embracing and speaking kindly to him.

Then Guatemuz said to him, "Señor Malinche, I have done all that was my duty in the defence of this my city and my vassals, and I could do no more. Now I am brought by force a prisoner before you, and I am in your power. Take out the dagger that you have hanging at your waist and strike me dead at once."

As he said this he wept, and so did others of the chiefs who stood beside him. It is possible, though Diaz does not say so, that Cortés himself shed a few tears, for he had tears at his command when they were necessary, as have so many other leaders of mankind.

What Cortés says himself is, "And I consoled him, and I told him that he need have no fear, and thus after the taking of this lord, the war was at an end."

The scene was the most memorable of the kind that has ever taken place in the New World. Perhaps taking into consideration all the circumstances, no other scene exactly similar has ever taken place. Diaz records that it happened on the 13th of August, just at the hour of vespers, and on the day of our Lord San Hipolito, of the year 1521. He returns thanks "to our Lord Jesus Christ and to His Blessed Mother the most holy Virgin Mary, Amen."

"It rained and thundered," as he says, "and there was much lightning during the night. The lightning lasted up to midnight, more than at other times." Still Diaz does not see a miracle in it, as he well might have done. What he does say is much more to the point.

"And when Guatemuz had been taken prisoner, all of the soldiers were as deaf as if one had been set upon a bell tower where they were ringing many bells, and in an instant those who were ringing suddenly ceased to ring. And this I say because during all the three-and-ninety days that we were at the siege, by day and night the Mexicans kept up a constant din of yelling and shrill whistling. Some shouted out their orders to the squadrons who had to fight upon the causeways, and others halloed, calling up fleets of canoes to attack the brigantines and to harass us upon the bridges, whilst others were at work at sharpening palisades, and others opening and deepening the waterways and openings of the canals. Some worked at building walls, others sharpened spears and arrows, and the women prepared round stones for them to cast at us with slings. From all the oratories and the temples, and from the accursed houses of their cursed idols, they never stopped a moment blowing trumpets and war whistles. And the great drum was always booming with its melancholy sound.

"Thus day and night the noise was ceaseless, so that we could not hear each other speak, and after Guatemuz was taken it all stopped at once, and for this cause I say it was as if we had been up in a belfry all the time."

This soldier-like and at the same time artistic description of his sensations closes an epoch in the writer's life. Up to that time he had been a common soldier, brave, skilful, and enduring, as no doubt were a hundred others of his sort.

Mexico once taken, he emerges into another sphere and gives us more of his own doings and of himself.

For he had now become a "Conqueror," a man to be reckoned with, often consulted even by Cortés, although quite naturally his advice was never taken, as is usual in such cases, and will be whilst the world continues world.

# CHAPTER XII

After the description of the taking of the city, and the ceasing of the noise, Diaz appears to feel the want of rest, for he goes off into several extraneous matters, such as the following: "Guatemuz was of a pleasant aspect, both of body and of countenance. His face was long and cheerful.[1] His eyes were grave and courteous when he looked towards you, and there was nothing wrong about them. His age was maybe twenty-three or twenty-four. His complexion was fairer than that of Indians in general, who are dark. They said his wife was a niece of Montezuma's, who was his uncle, a very handsome girl and young."

Holguin and Sandoval both claimed to have captured Guatemuz, and their contention afforded Diaz a chance of airing such erudition as he had, for he observes that Cortés, in settling the dispute, said it was like the quarrel between Marius and Sylla at the taking of Jugurtha in the days of ancient Ṛome.

Diaz, after the fashion of most men of little learning, was fond of showing the little that he had, and the intolerable stench from the hundreds of dead bodies

[1] Long, cheerful faces are not common. The Spanish saying of this is, "A face like a male mule's." Your long, cheerful face, is like your fat, ill-tempered man, something of a portent.

which lay in all the streets brings to his memory the destruction of Jerusalem, which he had read about, most probably long after Mexico was won.

"Let us return once more to our conversation[1] . . . after we took this great and populous city . . . and after having given thanks to our Lord and to His Blessed Mother, and offering certain vows to God, Cortés gave orders for a banquet to be prepared in Cuyoacán, to testify his joy . . . for it, he had plenty of wine which had come in a ship to the port of Villa Rica and pigs that it had brought from Cuba." Strong, heady Spanish wine and pork seems rather heavy cheer for ordinary, unheroic men, especially in such a climate; but Bernal Diaz and his comrades most probably had stomachs like an ostrich, and for the last three months had been upon scant fare. "When we got to the banquet there were not sufficient tables, nor even seats for the third part of the captains and the soldiers." This was not to be wondered at, for Cortés had asked the whole army, and there were no lady patronesses, as at Almacks at a later date. For want of them, "there was much confusion, and it might have been as well that the banquet had never taken place, for some rather untoward things occurred at it, and also the plant of Noah induced some to commit scandals. There were men at that feast who after dinner walked upon the tables, and could not find their way out of the courtyard."

In Scotland, though we place, or used to place, one foot upon the table when the *perfervidum ingenium* mounted a little to our heads, we never walked upon

[1] *Platicas.*

the table, although occasionally we had some difficulty in finding our way home.

At this first dinner-party in the New World some said (after dessert, of course) "that they would buy horses with golden saddles, and there were crossbowmen who declared that every arrow in their quivers should in the future be of gold." Others again, but these were common fellows without the imagination that alone makes good crossbowmen, "rolled headlong down the steps."

Like doings have occurred even when ladies graced the festive board, but this first introduction of our European ways amongst a heathen set of men leaves little to desire. There was a ball to follow. This too was the first function of its kind held in the glad New World. Diaz reports and comments on it in his inimitable way. "When the tables were taken away, the ladies that there were stepped out to dance with partners who were laden with their armour—it was a sight to make you laugh. There were but few ladies either in the camp or in New Spain. I shall not mention any of their names, for next day there were satirical verses made upon them." This shows that Diaz was a gentleman, for evidently, even after so many years had passed, he who remembered all the colours and each peculiarity of every horse must have remembered all the ladies' names. Most probably by the time he wrote, the descendants of these ladies were the chief citizens in Mexico.

However, there were complaints of what had gone on at the banquet and the ball, brought to Cortés by a certain friar. But, as Cortés was most discreet, he

called the friar and said, although he did not make excuse for the excesses, "Now, what your reverence must do is to order a procession, and say a mass and preach to us, and tell the soldiers that they should not steal the Indians' daughters, or brawl or pilfer, and that they should behave like Catholic Christians, so that God should prosper us."

The advice was good, though tardy, and was conceived upon the strictest principles of profit and of loss; but at the same time one is obliged to say quite suitable to the capacity of those to whom it was addressed. Moralists in every age have always stepped in, but usually a little after "the soldiers have stolen the Indians' daughters," generally with the effect of making other soldiers careful to steal when nobody was looking on. Bernal Diaz, we may be sure, did not regard such subtleties, for casuistry had no place in his mind or in the minds of most Castilians, either of his time or of ours. If he wanted an Indian maiden, he asked Cortés for her straight out, and neither stole nor bothered in the least to find out how the power to give or to withhold was vested in Cortés.

What he did care about was his character as a good soldier, and on that head he breaks into one of those didactic monologues which are a part and parcel of the Castilian mind, and reach their highest point in the soliloquies of Don Quixote and his squire.

"Now that I am out of these most fierce and hard-fought battles which we had with the Mexicans by day and night, and I give thanks to God that I got out of them alive, I wish to tell a thing, a most strange thing that happened to myself. It was that after I saw the

sacrifice and tearing out the hearts alive of the two-and-sixty soldiers of Cortés of which I spoke . . . and what I am about to say will seem to some a want of spirit, but if they will consider, it is really on account of the excessive spirit with which in those days I used to expose myself in the thickest of the fight, for at that time I held myself for a good soldier, and was esteemed as one by others, and did as much as did the boldest of my comrades . . . before my captain's eyes . . . and as I used to see each day one or another of my fellows carried off and sacrificed . . . I used to fear that one of those days the same would happen to myself, for they had seized me once or twice, and only by God's will had I escaped . . . and I had ever present to my mind their deaths, and for that cause I feared their miserable fate . . . so as I said before I went into a fight there came a loathing,[1] and a great sadness crept upon my heart, and then I used to give myself into God's hands and those of His most Holy Mother, our Blessed Lady, just as I went into the fight, and instantly that horror fell away from me." The above sincere and simple and intensely human passage shows us the kind of man he was. One feels him struggling, half ashamed to lay bare his feeling to us, after the fashion of the true artist who delivers up his soul, as a good woman lays aside her modesty in love, after a struggle with herself. For there are mental prostitutions as there are bodily, and the soul that never has said no to its own promptings, is but a prostitute.

Diaz goes on, "I also want to say that it was new

[1] *Se me ponia por delante, una como grima y, tristeza grandisima en el corazon.*

to me to feel that unaccustomed fear, for I had been in many dangerous battles, and by rights my heart should have been seasoned,[1] and I should have been less sensible to danger than at first."

This may be so in logic, (a foolish guide in most things), but in practice, the experience of Diaz is that of most men who have braved many perils. The difference is that few are brave enough to speak so truly of their fears.

After enumerating all the battles and the dangers that he had run since he first entered Mexico, to account for, or to mitigate what he felt upon entering a fight, he finishes, "Let then those gentlemen who understand the art of war and have been in peril of their lives, declare what my fear sprang from and whether it arose from lack of spirit or the excess of it." He did not know that gentlemen, even those learned in the art of war, were as unable to declare as he himself. An ancient Scottish lady whom I knew in early life once stopped me as we were walking on the road and asked me, "What becomes of the soul directly after death?" Before I had the time to frame an answer she added, "I have asked clergymen, and even they can't tell me anything."

After the town was taken, naturally there had to be a squaring up of all accounts, for many of the soldiers had to buy their horses and their arms at prices which, as Diaz tells us, were exorbitant. Forty and fifty dollars for a crossbow, an arquebuse a hundred, a sword fifty, and a horse eight hundred to a thousand, and sometimes even more.

[1] *Curtido*=tanned.

This little note is interesting, as it shows what must have been the prices of guns, swords, and crossbows in Spain at that time, if prices such as Diaz mentions were held exorbitant so far away as was the army of Cortés. They were high, of course, but not so high as one might have supposed, and in relation to the prices paid for the horses were nothing wonderful.

Diaz says that many of his readers used to ask him how it fell out so few of the first conquerors of Mexico had enriched themselves, and why they had not stayed in or about the town. It appears that when they found there was no gold in the immediate country, and that the account books which were found in Montezuma's treasury all spoke of gold having been brought from distant provinces, all of the conquerors wanted to go and try their luck as far off as they could.

He himself went to Cortés, and asked his leave to go with Sandoval, and Cortés answered him, "Upon my conscience, brother Bernal Diaz del Castillo, you quite deceive yourself,[1] and I should like that you would stay with me; but if it is your wish to go with your friend Sandoval, go in God's name . . . but I know well you will repent it, and repent leaving me." Cortés spoke truly, as Diaz afterwards admitted, for he says, speaking of the question, that his curious readers asked him, "So we all went to far-off provinces, and we all were deceived."

Diaz did not accompany Cortés upon his expedition to Panuco; but, as was usual with him, he seems to have informed himself of all that happened, noting down little details which would have escaped most other conquerors.

[1] *Vives engañado.*

He tells us how in that province the Indians made fire by rubbing sticks together, and adds: "As they do generally in all the Indies,[1] those who know how to make it in that way."

The Panuco Indians "were the worst and dirtiest of any in New Spain, had the worst habits, were sacrificers and cruel in the extreme, drunkards and dirty, with thirty other wickednesses," which he does not set down. Cortés, like a prudent man, sent off at once an embassy to Spain, bearing with it the most potent arguments that any embassy can have—rich gifts to lay before the Emperor.

Diaz seems to have been consulted as to several matters, for he speaks of the embassy as "our embassy," a thing he never does unless with cause, for he was not the least a snob.

The object of the mission was to ask for confirmation of their possession to the first conquerors and to their sons.

"We asked His Majesty," says Diaz, "to send us out no lawyers, for we feared that as soon as they should come they would set all the country by the ears with their accursed books."

After the Conquest the various captains were sent off or set off upon their own account to the outlying provinces, and Diaz went with Sandoval to explore amongst the Zapotecas near the isthmus of Tehuantepec.

He tells us that in the company of Sandoval there were three soldiers who were celebrated, and that they all were called Castillo. "One of them was called

[1] *Con lumbre que sacan con unos palillos, como le sacan en todas Indias, los que saben como se ha de sacar.*

El Galán, and that one was myself. Of the other two Castillos, one was of such a humour that he was always lost in thought, and when they spoke to him he always stopped a little to think what he should say, and when he answered his answer never came out right, so that we laughed at him and called him Castillo the wool-gatherer. The third was called Alonso del Castillo, who always answered quickly, and always answered well. Him we called Castillo the ready-witted; but let us come back to our tale."

Now and again Diaz brings himself up in this way, as if he thought that matters of the kind were not serious enough for an historian; but luckily he generally forgets to do so till he has set down something interesting. What Diaz says about the conquerors leaving the substance to grasp the shadow applies as much to himself as any of them. To do him justice, he is well aware of it, for he tells us that in the expedition to Tehuantepec, on which he went with Sandoval, that Sandoval assigned him certain towns and many Indians in *encomienda*, and that he would not have them on account of his friendship for his chief. He says he would have been rich if he had stayed in the place where the Indians were assigned him, for afterwards two towns were built there, "but it appeared to me that as he was my friend that it did not become me not to accompany Sandoval." This was much to the credit of his heart if not his head; but Diaz still was young, and Mexico had hitherto seemed such a land of miracles that it may well have seemed to him too early in the day to settle down. Incidentally he tells us that the Zapoteca Indians were the best fighters that they

hitherto had met, and that a captain, one Briones, who had been in the East, said that he thought them fiercer than the Turks.

From the Zapoteca country, Sandoval marched across Mexico until they reached the Guazacoalcos[1] river. Here Sandoval, Luis Marin, Diego de Godoy, "and many other gentlemen and persons of quality and myself" all settled down.

"If I omit to set down all their names I do it to save time; but be assured that upon feast days full eighty mounted men used to appear upon the square. Eighty in those days counted more than would eight hundred now, the reason is that there were hardly any horses in New Spain, and those there were were dear."

The settlement became one of the most flourishing of Mexico, and for the first few years it furnished the best soldiers to Cortés, and in especial for his great march to Nicaragua; but it soon fell away, and Diaz, writing in his old age, says "now its inhabitants are few."

Just as they were getting things into order in the new settlement a ship came into a harbour fifteen leagues away, bringing amongst its passengers Dona Catalina Xuarez, La Marcayda, the wife of Cortés, and also La Zambrana and her sons, her grandmother, and many other ladies; "also I think that at that time arrived Elvira Lopez, wife of Juan de Palma, who was hung, and afterwards Elvira married one Argueta."

[1] Diaz always calls it "Guacacualco," which may have been its proper name.

The arrival of his wife could not have been agreeable to Cortés, for there was Doña Marina, who was not easy to explain away after the part that she had played. These sort of situations have occurred to other conquerors besides Cortés, but they have not always had a historian so observant as was Bernal Diaz to set them down. Later on in his book he returns again to it, and tells us all about it as uncompromisingly as he treats every other incident of those adventurous times.

After the Conquest, Cortés had many difficulties with his various captains and their men in regard to the partition of the loot. Diaz, although he always took the common soldier's side, was never blinded to the real greatness of Cortés. In the chapter where he tells about the expedition of Pedro de Alvarado to Guatemala, he begins by saying: "Thus, as Cortés was always full of high thoughts and resolutions, he wished in everything to imitate Alexander of Macedon . . . so he resolved to send out Pedro de Alvarado to conquer and to settle other lands."

As Cortés had these sentiments, Diaz evidently thought it incumbent on him to chronicle the events of every expedition that set out. What strikes one nowadays is the comparatively little trouble that the conquerors seem to have had in making journeys such as that which Alvarado made from Mexico to Quetzaltinango, even when fighting all the way. Certainly, Diaz does not tell us how long the expedition lasted, but it must have taken several months.

All these various expeditions had a general likeness, and in every case the different tribes seem to have

struggled for their liberty to the very last. Diaz says, speaking of Alvarado's expedition, "I am obliged to pass the details over lightly, for I was not at any of these conquests."

In fact, it was not till the year 1524, on his return from the celebrated expedition of Cortés to Honduras, that he saw any of that part of Mexico. When he did pass through that way he was wounded by an arrow,[1] but in his usual way he treats it lightly, perhaps because by this time his whole body must have been scarred all over with innumerable wounds.

Cortés now sent out Christobal de Oli to conquer what was known as Higueras, and to-day Honduras, sending with him a well-equipped expedition, amongst whom went five "conquerors[2] . . . who had served His Majesty in all the Conquest, and now looked to enjoy repose in their own homes . . . and this I say, because it was no good for anyone to say to Cortés, 'Sir, let me rest, for I have served enough,' for he made them go where he ordered them, by force."

Christobal de Oli was one of those who had risked his life to save Cortés during the siege of Mexico; but the two men were never friends. Oli took with him one Briones, a captain who had served in Italy and in the East, but a man who had a grudge against Cortés. This man worked upon Oli until he got him to rebel. Diego Velazquez, the Governor of Cuba, who had never ceased to do his worst against Cortés, hearing about Oli, came to the port in Honduras to which Oli

[1] *Entonces me hirieron de un flechazo mas fué poca cosa.*

[2] Diaz never refers to anyone as a "conqueror" unless he sailed from Cuba with Cortés.

had sailed. Between them they agreed that Christobal de Oli should throw off his allegiance to Cortés and should proclaim himself governor of Honduras, and hold it for the king. This Christobal de Oli was the only one of all the captains of Cortés who turned against him, and the fact speaks for itself for his capacity and power of ruling men.

Diaz preserves the rebel captain for us in a few vigorous lines—

"Christobal de Oli was a brave man of his condition, either on foot or on his horse. He was brave in extreme, but he was born to be commanded, and never to command. His age was about thirty-six, and he came from Baeza or Linares. As to his presence, he was tall and strong, his shoulders very broad, and generally he was well set up and rather fair. His face was handsome, though his lower lip was split a little. When he spoke his voice was loud and terrifying, but he was affable in conversation. Other good qualities he had, as frankness, and in the beginning he was a faithful servant of Cortés; but that desire he had to lead and not be led . . . that and the wicked counsel that he listened to, completely blinded him."

This well-made, hard-riding, empty-headed captain, set on by Briones and in conjunction with Velazquez, founded a town which he called "El Triunfo de la Cruz." His rebellion was to cost him dear, for Cortés was not a man to pardon any act against his own authority, as long as he possessed the power of punishing. However, he did not know of the rebellion and the founding of the new town till eight months afterwards. In the meantime, Diaz was sent with one

Captain Luis Marin to pacify the province of Chiapa, which had broken out into revolt.

It appears as if this was the first time that Diaz was employed in a position of authority, or at the least of some consideration, for he informs us that as the force Marin had with him was not large, he was sent to try and bring the revolted natives into the paths of peace. Diaz was a man eminently fitted for such a mission. His courage was beyond all doubt, and he had plenty (as his history shows) of that sound common sense so frequent in Castile, so often wanting in the other provinces of Spain. Moreover, he could speak several of the Indian languages, and was a man naturally averse from shedding blood.

So with Rodrigo de Guao, a native of Avila, Francisco Martin, who was half a Biscayan, and Francisco Jimenez, native of Inguixuela, in Estremadura, he set out on his embassy. He had no luck, for, as he tells us, they hardly had the time to begin their arguments with the natives, than three or four squadrons of Indians sallied out and fell on them, killing at once two of his comrades and wounding him severely in the throat. This wound must have been one of the worst that he received, for he says, as he had to fight on for his life, he was unable to do anything to stop the bleeding, which put him "in great peril" of his life. In fact, never in all the adventures that he passed through had he a narrower escape.

"My only other comrade that was still unwounded was Francisco Martin . . . who suddenly took to flight,[1]

[1] *Acordó de tomar las de Villadiego.* This is a phrase Diaz was certain to employ. It is both idiomatic and Castilian.

and got into a canoe which was close by in the river Macapa. As I was all alone and badly wounded, in order that they should not finish killing me, I ran into a thicket almost without knowing what I did. When I came to my senses, I said, 'May Our Blessed Lady help me if it is true I have to die in the power of these dogs.' Then I pulled myself together, and rushing out from the thicket I broke through the Indians, opening a way with some good sword-strokes; and though they wounded me again, I got to the canoe in which was my companion Francisco Martin . . . with four Indians of those that we had brought with us . . . they during the fight had thrown down the burdens that they carried and run to the canoes. That was what saved our lives, for our enemies stopped to steal what our Indians had let fall. . . . So God was pleased that we should escape and not die there, and in the canoes we crossed that river, which there is very broad and deep, and full of alligators. So that the Cimatecas (for that is what those Indians are named) should not follow us, we hid for eight days in the woods."

The news was brought to Guacacualco that they had all been killed, and by the time that they returned they found that Captain Luis Marin had divided all their personal belongings and sold their property. "So after three-and-twenty days we got back to the town." Diaz does not say how Captain Luis Marin excused his promptitude, nor does he say a word about the conduct of his friend who took to flight so inopportunely, but merely chronicles the fact.

As Diaz was a prominent man in all this pacification of the province of the Chiapas, he goes into great

detail about all the battles, and the perils that he ran. As if he had not had enough of fighting with the Indians, he fought a duel with one Godoy about division of the spoil, in which they both were wounded, but at the intercession of their captain, Don Luis Marin, embraced and parted friends.

Such was life in those days in Mexico, and such it would appear to have remained, without much difference, down to the present day, except the difference of arms.

## CHAPTER XIII

The long disputes that arose in Spain between the emissaries of Cortés and those sent by Velazquez, the governor of Cuba, Diaz relates with some prolixity, but on the whole with as little dullness as is possible. Unfortunately for Cortés, the president of the Council of the Indies was the bishop of Burgos, a personal friend of Velazquez, and a most prejudiced and narrow-minded man.

To him came everyone who had a grievance, and poured out all his woes. It appears that a German gentleman about the Court, whom Diaz calls Monsieur de Lasoa, was the first man who dared stand up against the president in favour of Cortés.

Diaz tells, with a dry humour all his own, that Pamphilo de Narvaez arrived in Spain and had an audience with the Emperor. He spoke so haughtily and gave so strange an account of how he was defeated, that His Cesarean Majesty laughed heartily. Charles v. did not laugh easily, and it is to the credit of Narvaez that he procured him one of his rare intervals of mirth.

Charles was above all things a soldier, and Narvaez took the worst way possible to ingratiate himself with him, by dwelling on the superiority of the force he had had at his command. Charles must have been

astonished when he heard that Narvaez had with him full thirteen hundred infantry and a hundred mounted men, yet still Cortés, with scarce three hundred and without cavalry or guns, routed and took him prisoner.

The Emperor came to a decision on the various points at issue between Cortés, Velazquez, and Narvaez, after the fashion of all emperors, who, as they never hear the truth from anyone, have to decide all business in the dark.

He confirmed Cortés as governor of Mexico, but on the other hand left certain matters pending, which had the effect of making his authority much less respected than it should have been.

All that Velazquez got out of the whole affair was that Cortés should pay his debts to him, especially for certain ships he had provided when the expedition was fitted out. Narvaez seems to have got nothing beyond the Emperor's ridicule. Others who had grievances were ordered to be gratified with certain grants of Indians and of lands in Mexico. This cost the Emperor nothing, and his treasury could well have stood drafts of such a nature on it to the tune of millions of crowns.

One memorable provision he did make, but it had been suggested to him, as Diaz tells us, by the procurators who had been sent to him from Mexico by all the Conquerors. He ordained that for a term of years no lawyers should be sent to Mexico, for when they went they were sure to sow a crop of tares in the wheat and set dissensions afoot.

Whether the Emperor said this himself or Diaz put it into his mouth is a thing we shall never know, or how long it availed.

When the news came to Cuba, Velazquez, who had hoped for a far different result, fell ill, and in a month or two he died of "discontent," as Diaz tells us, or, as we say nowadays, of a broken heart. Diaz always, and rightly, on the look-out for the interests of the common soldier, tartly remarks, "I used to say in those days that all that they (the envoys) were concerned about was for their own fortunes and that of Cortés, and that as regards us, who did the fighting and put Cortés into the position that he occupied, we were left still struggling with our difficulties." This is likely enough to have been true, and probably, if ever men grow reasonable, will be the cause of the cessation of all wars; for though soldiers can be trained to face all weapons, even the most death-dealing, whenever they see clearly that there is not and never will be any reward for them except their daily pay, hard knocks, and paltry pension in prospective, then they will throw their arms into the mud. Diaz was an exception to the soldiers of his day. In all the literature that treats about the conquest of the New World no one but he seems to have seen that it was the rank and file that made the general. The others grumbled when they were not paid, when loot was scarce, or when their leaders robbed them too outrageously; none seemed to see they were the conquerors, just as so few to-day see that the mill hand, not the manufacturer, turns out the cotton thread.

On this occasion of the return of the envoys from Castile Diaz launches out into a disquisition of the rights, if not of man, still of the common soldier, which shows him to have been far more clear-sighted than

most of the poor dupes of modern times who to the sound of execrable music, under some flag or other of ill-assorted colours, let themselves be led like sheep up to the slaughter for other people's ends. Sheep at least do not know the shambles wait for them, but the silly soldier does. Diaz enumerates all that the soldiers had done for Cortés, and yet he does it in a way that shows he loved him and was proud of him. He does it, as a man may criticise one of his own family, with the clear insight into character that long acquaintance gives ; but yet with something in his heart that makes him ready to be up in arms if you agree with him.

In spite of all his criticisms, when evil days fell upon Cortés, and he was deprived of the governorship, Diaz was one of those who wrote to Spain to have him reinstated in his government.

His ideas were strangely liberal for the times, for he says openly that the Emperor ought to have been contented with almost everything he got from Mexico, as not only did he do nothing towards the Conquest, or help either with money or with men, but he was quite unaware it was even going on, being in Flanders at the time. He might have said that in point of fact the Emperor did all he could to hinder Cortés in everything he did, by sending out foolish officials, quite ignorant of Mexico, to supersede him and impair his usefulness.

What Diaz did not see was that the large sums Cortés sent to Charles v. were of the nature of a sop to Cerberus, and without them not only Cortés, but the humblest soldier who followed him, would have

been put aside without a penny of reward. The Emperor's court, as is the case in every other court, literally swarmed with self-interested men, all looking for a job. These would have got themselves appointed to governorships, and in their trains would have brought out troops of new soldiers fresh from the wars in Italy, to have dropped like locusts on the land, without the hush-money that Cortés sent to Spain.

Still, it was true enough, as Bernal Diaz says, that Cortés was not by nature grateful, and oftener did favours to attach a new man to his cause than he rewarded his old friends. At times Cortés, to get rid of some undesirable person, gave him a command of some expedition in which he must have known he was certain never to succeed.

An amusing instance of this occurred in the appointment of one Rodrigo Ranjel (a fellow-townsman, but an enemy of Cortés) to go and pacify the Zapoteca Indians, a warlike tribe which had already given trouble to Captain Marin, a more experienced leader than Ranjel. The man himself had long petitioned for a command of some kind or another, and hearing of this expedition being fitted out, never ceased importuning Cortés to be sent out in command. Diaz says that very likely Cortés wished him never to return, for "he had a very evil tongue."[1]

Cortés, who had no wish to lose his expedition, sent Diaz as a sort of military adviser to Ranjel. Diaz knew well enough that the Zapoteca Indians were most warlike—he calls them "active, ferocious, and great archers"—and says it was a foregone conclusion that

[1] *Porque, era de mala lengua.*

the expedition would be a failure under such a leader as it had.

The picture that Diaz draws of him is far from flattering: "He was not fit for such a charge, because he was always ailing . . . very thin, his legs and arms like sticks, and all his body and his head covered with running sores." The complaint he suffered from was one that is supposed to have originated in the New World, and certainly his whole condition unfitted him for a severe campaign.[1]

Diaz relates the expedition half angrily and half ironically, for it appears that the commander, by his wrong-headedness, put them all in peril of their lives. Although a fool and quite unused to Indian warfare ("he was not at the siege of Mexico, or any of our fights"), Ranjel was not a coward. Once he was badly wounded on the head and had a horse killed under him. The Indians seized him and would have borne him off for sacrifice had not Diaz and others of his men come to his rescue as he lay stretched upon the ground. Some of the soldiers who had but just arrived from Spain, seeing the war against the Cimateca Indians was a serious affair, with little to be got out of it but hard knocks, began advising Ranjel to go home.

He, poor man, being wounded and in the lamentable state of health that Diaz tells of, was nothing loth, but wished, as many another general has wished, to save his face and put the blame of a retreat on someone else. So Diaz says: "Ranjel called me apart . . . and said that all the soldiers had been advising a retreat. Then I reproached him, and as we had known each

[1] *Mal de bubas.*

other more than four years ago in Cuba I said to him, 'How, sir! What will they say about you when you are so close to the town of Cimateca to turn your face away? Cortés will not be pleased, and malicious people who do not love you will throw it up to you that you have done nothing in this Zapoteca expedition, although you had so many of the old conquerors all fighting by your side.'"

It was of course galling to Bernal Diaz that the expedition should be abandoned before anything was done. Most of the soldiers came from his own settlement of Guacacualco, and he himself was the chief man amongst them, and one not accustomed to retreat. So he said: "'It seems to me and to the other soldiers that it is for your honour and our own that we should still go forward. I will go on with all my comrades[1] to scout amongst the marshes and the woods, and with the crossbowmen and the harquebusiers we will go on to Cimateca. As for my horse, you had better give him to someone who knows how to use his lance, for he will be of little use to me on the road we have to go . . . you can come on with the other mounted men and follow us.' When Rodrigo Ranjel heard this, as he was a boaster and a loud talker, he came out of the hut in which the council had been held and called out to the soldiers, 'The die is cast; we have to push on boldly. By God' (that was his way of speaking), 'Bernal Diaz del Castillo has spoken truly and given good advice.'"

One sees at once that Diaz forced him to go on; but after a few days, seeing that nothing was to be made

[1] The Guacacualco men.

out of the expedition, Ranjel went back again, and Diaz, finding himself deserted by his captain, returned to Guacacualco, and the whole thing was given up. "That is all the fame that Ranjel got out of his famous expedition; and when two years were past we returned back again to the work of pacifying the Zapotecas and the Cimatecas, and did it thoroughly, and reduced them all to peace." No doubt he did it thoroughly, for he was just the kind of man to do so, and peace is but a word that means just what you wish that it should mean when you have got the upper hand.

The simplicity and the good faith of Diaz shines out through almost every page he writes. When Cortés had collected eighty thousand gold dollars he sent them to the Emperor by the hands of Diego de Zoto, and Diaz thinks,[1] but is not sure if he went at that time, a certain Juan de Ribera.

This Ribera, Diaz did not like, for "he was blind of an eye . . . and what I felt about him was that he was no true man, for when he played at cards or dice, it did not seem to me that he played fair."

An excellent reason for not employing a man in public life, for he who cheats at cards may cheat with public money, a thing we might bear in mind in similar cases in this country, instead of making love affairs the only bar to public confidence.

Diaz was right in his surmise, for this one-eyed card-sharper stole all the money that Cortés entrusted to him to give to his father, old Don Martin Cortés. Besides the eighty thousand dollars, Cortés sent to the Emperor a culverin called the Phœnix. It had been

[1] *Y no me acuerdo bien, si fué en aquella sazon, un Juan de Ribera.*

cast with a percentage of gold and silver in its composition, and, as Diaz says, "for workmanship it was unique throughout the world." Upon the breech was engraved, "Esta ave nacio, sin par, yo en serviros sin segundo, y vos sin igual en el mundo."[1]

This motto seems to have offended certain people about the Emperor's court. It is possible that those who were disgusted were precisely those who had done least to serve the Emperor and were the loudest against what they called the arrogance of Cortés. To quiet them, though he accepted the culverin, he had it melted and the metals all assayed. The process rendered twenty thousand ducats. The act was royal, and the Emperor proved a substantial gainer, and gave another proof that in every age gold is the deity that monarchs chiefly have adored.

In those days news took a considerable time to percolate from Honduras to Mexico, but after several months Cortés received the account of the rebellion of Christobal de Oli, and sent a captain, one Francisco de las Casas, with an armed force against him. This Las Casas fell into the power of Oli, but when he was a prisoner entered into a plot against him, wounded him with his own hand, brought him to justice, and finally cut off his head.

As Las Casas was unable to return, Cortés was left in doubt whether he too might not have joined Oli in the revolt against his power. As he was not a man who liked to leave such kind of things uncertain, and as he had heard that Honduras was a country of much

[1] "This bird (the Phœnix) was born without an equal. I (Cortés) am without second in serving you, and you without an equal in the world."

mineral wealth, he determined to fit out an expedition to find out what had become of his two captains and to discover mines.

The distance was enormous and the country quite unknown, broken with mountain ranges and crossed by rivers, and there were tracts of marshes that had to be crossed upon the line of march. No march in all the annals of military history was more extraordinary. Hannibal at least knew through what countries he would have to pass. Moreover, both he and Julius Cæsar had great countries behind them, from which to draw supplies. Alexander was a king, and had a seasoned army that was devoted to him, and even he made no plunge into the unknown as did Cortés when he set out upon his memorable march. The retreat of the ten thousand under Xenophon is more comparable to the march to Honduras, but then the country through which they had to pass was easy in comparison. Cortés had not ten thousand veterans[1] with him, but only those who had been at the siege of Mexico, a relatively small band of soldiers fresh from Spain, and not acclimatised. He had upwards of three thousand Indians, all armed after their own fashion, and many more to act as baggage carriers. By this time his exploits had become well known in Spain, and many gentlemen and dozens of adventurers[2] of every sort flocked to his standard; but, as Diaz hints,

[1] Cortés, in his fifth letter to Charles v., puts the number of his Spanish troops at about two hundred. Rodrigo de Albornoz, in a letter from Mexico, 15th December 1525, says one hundred and twenty soldiers, twenty harquebusiers, and twenty crossbowmen. Diaz raises the number to nearly four hundred.

[2] *Gente extravagante.*

not a few of them were but a hindrance to him on his long journey through the wilds. Cortés set out with a great household—a chaplain, many priests, Doña Marina the interpreter, a major-domo, butler, treasurer, a doctor, pages, and eight running footmen, two falconers, a man who had the charge of all his plate, a band of music, several mountebanks, and a groom of the chambers—in fact, the household of a prince. His army must have looked a little like the host the Sultans of Morocco used to take with them, only a few years ago, upon their annual change of capitals, or when they went about to gather taxes or to chastise revolted tribes.

Diaz lets us see clearly that he thought the expedition not well suited for what it had to do. This was the opinion of most prudent men in Mexico, and that it was not wise to leave the city without its governor. Cortés, who probably was unaware of the plots that were being formed against him, most likely only thought he had to guard against an Indian revolt. To deprive the Indians of their head, he took with him Guatemuz, just as the Roman generals used to carry captive kings along with them upon their progresses. No expedition on so large a scale had yet been seen in the New World, and as it went along the road towards Guacacualco, people came out from towns distant thirty leagues from the line of march to salute Cortés, as if, in the quaint phrase of Bernal Diaz, "they had come out for some great benefit." This he attributes to the terror they had of him; but at the same time, love or respect may have been equally the motive power.

In Orizaba, Juan Xaramillo, who himself a rich

man, yet went in charge of the plate that Cortés took with him, was married before witnesses[1] to Doña Marina the interpreter. Therefore we may suppose Cortés was tired of her, for she, as Diaz says, loved Cortés as if he were a god, and had a son by him. It may have been that, in the fashion of the Oriental princes, Cortés sought to attach Xaramillo to himself by giving him Marina as a wife. At any rate, Marina lived long and happily with her new husband, and Cortés endowed her liberally.

Almost from the first the expedition seems to have been unfortunate, for at the crossing of a river near Guazpaltepeque three canoes were overset and the new-married Xaramillo lost the half of his effects. Diaz says that the river swarmed with alligators, so that no Indian dare venture into it to rescue any of the goods. That he was well aware of all the dangers of the expedition is quite apparent, for he talks of our most "dangerous journey" on several occasions, and he was not a man lightly to be dismayed, however difficult the task.

[1] *Se casó Juan Xaramillo con Doña Marina la lengua.*

## CHAPTER XIV

From the setting out of the ill-fated expedition Bernal Diaz took a high place in it. To this he was entitled by his long experience, his unshaken courage, and his devotion to Cortés. In all the difficulties in which he found himself during his long and arduous life he never rose superior to all the blows of fortune more certainly than he did on this surprising march. He had been opposed to it, and had not scrupled to advise Cortés against it; but once embarked, he showed himself a hero and a devoted follower of his leader, almost to the death.

Cortés was moved not so much by a spirit of adventure, as his desire to punish a rebellious captain, and for this he put in peril his new conquest, and as a Spanish writer says: "In this long pilgrimage he traversed five hundred leagues, passing through thickest forests, fording deep rivers, wading in marshes, climbing high mountain ranges, enduring parching heat and the extremity of hunger and of cold, and every kind of hardship . . . only to punish one of his officers who had rebelled against his power." Well did Bernal Diaz foresee what he was called upon to suffer, and he complains that he and all the Guacacualco[1] men, most of them conquerors, were called upon to

[1] Guatzocoalcos, in proper spelling.

march and leave all that they had, and adds: "I was sent out as captain over thirty Spaniards and three thousand Mexicans." The line of march led them to various rivers, which they had to cross, sometimes by swimming, sometimes in canoes, and at every river that they crossed they lost a man or two. He complains bitterly that Cortés detached him and his men to fetch the chiefs of a place called Jagotan who had fled into the woods.

This, he says, was an inconsiderate order, and had but a poor result, for all they did was but to bring in seven of the chiefs and a few tribesmen. As Diaz was established on the Guatzocoalcos River in the south of Mexico, of all the conquerors he was the man who knew the most about the road. Still he knew little when the bounds of his own territory were passed.

He tells us that Cortés relied upon a cloth of native stuff (*nequen*) which he had brought from Guatzocoalcos "on which was marked the towns we had to pass as far as Huyacala"[1]—in fact, a map made by the Indians.

When they had passed Huyacala they came to a great river over which they had to build a wooden bridge. The Indians, he said, helped us as far as they were able, "but for three days we had no other food but herbs and roots." In fact, the want of food was their chief difficulty, for all the south of Mexico was thinly settled, and to get food for such an army as Cortés had with him, almost impossible.

[1] Very few of the towns or villages passed by Cortés can be identified to-day.

After the river which they crossed upon the wooden bridge,[1] they found no track at all, and had to cut a path through the thick woods. Two days they struggled, cutting their way with fearful labour and half starving, and on the morning of the third came back to where they started from, having described a circle and come out on their own trail. Cortés, as Diaz said, almost "burst with rage"[2] when he saw the desperate plight into which they had fallen and heard the murmurs of his men. No sign of any track was to be found, when luckily Cortés remembered that he had a compass with him.[3]

A pilot, one Pedro Lopez, was sent with it, and with the native map that they had brought from Guatzocoalcos, to go in front and try and find out where they were. This pilot having apparently found out the direction between the compass and the map, steadily guided them towards the west, saying he thought a village should be near at hand.

When all, even Cortés himself, who said that if by next day they had not reached some town they would be doomed, were just about to give themselves up to despair, they came upon some trees which had been newly felled. Diaz himself, who was in front

[1] Gómara, in his *Chronica de la Nueva España*, says: "The people who built the bridges murmured terribly at the work, and even at the captain (Cortés). He had to implore them to work on for five days more, and then if they could not do the work in that time, he would turn back. Spanish pride rose at this, although they murmured, and they answered they would wait on, even if they had to eat stones (*que esperarian aquel tiempo, aunque comiesen cantos*). The bridges were so well built that they lasted for years, and were known as the Bridges of Cortés, as if one should say the Columns of Hercules."

[2] *Queria reventar de enojo.*

[3] *Y Como Cortés en todo era diligente y por falta de solicitud no discuidaba, traiamos una aguja de marear.*

with Pedro Lopez, was the first to discover them, and after them a path. Their joy is only to be understood by men who have been lost in trackless woods in which the solitude weighs on the soul and cries of birds appear to mock you as you wander round. Luckily, in the town they found plenty of maize, with beans and other vegetables, and after eating "we gave thanks to God." Even the horses seemed to be overjoyed. Three of the Spaniards who were but fresh to the New World had died, and the poor mountebank and many of their Indian allies. So hard had hunger pressed them that several of the wretched Mexicans had roasted one of their dead comrades and had eaten him.

When Cortés learned this he was furious, and to show his disgust and his contempt of human suffering, commanded one of the poor starvelings to be burned alive. This he did as a warning to the rest not to break any of the precepts of the faith, after the fashion of men of his position down to the present day, who, though they break most of the laws themselves, always have some particular offence that stirs them to disgust.

The players on the sackbuts, dulcimers, and shawms[1] (as we may call them), being quite unaccustomed to pass hardships, refused to play upon their instruments with the exception of one man. However, the poor fellow's music was not appreciated. "We gave him to the devil, him and his music," Diaz says, "and we all said it sounded like the howling of foxes or of jackals, and that we would rather have a little maize than all the music in the world."

[1] *Chirimias, sacabuches, dulzainas.*

Their irritation was not to be wondered at under the circumstances, for if the *musico*, who still continued staunch and up to concert pitch, was one of those who played upon the *chirimia*,[1] even men with full stomachs scarcely could have listened to his strains unmoved. Diaz at this point says he had been asked why, when the army was in such dire straits, they had not eaten any of the herd of swine which they had brought with them.

He says the reason was that the swine-herds, by order of Cortés, always marched several days behind the vanguard, and that the army blazed the trees and left directions at every crossing of the road so that they should not lose the way. All the time that they had been starving in the woods two ships full of provisions had been sailing down the coast, but had lost touch with them.

When the expedition reached a place called Xicalungo, situated on a river not set down in any modern map, Cortés sent several soldiers, under Captain Luis Marin, to tell the captain of the ship to send back food in the canoes. The captains for some reason not explained fell quarrelling, and in the fight which followed they and their followers were killed, with the exception of some six or seven who, when the Indians saw them wounded and unarmed, they fell upon and massacred them all.

The moment seems to have been rather untimely for mere party politics, and the result was that the provisions all were lost and the ship set on fire. Once more the

[1] The *chirimia* is a kind of Moorish and devilish clarionet, possibly as moving in its effects on the human organism as Shakespeare asserts the bagpipes to be.

expedition found itself in want of food, and was forced to set out again upon its march guided by Indians who, the first night they camped, ran off into the woods.

In all these difficulties Diaz was, as an accomplished scout and Indian fighter, the right hand of Cortés. All his old comrades—Alvarado, Puertocarrero, and Alonso de Avila, those who had conquered Mexico and fought against Narvaez—were either in Spain or settled on their own lands in distant quarters of New Spain. Christobal de Oli was in rebellion, and only Diaz and Sandoval were men on whom he could rely. The rest were soldiers newly come from Spain or men who up to that time had never held command. As difficulties thickened on the expedition, Diaz became more necessary to Cortés. A second bridge had to be made over another river, and it was Diaz and the Guacacualco men who had to get it done.

At last they were reduced to eat the bark of trees and dig up roots to stay their hunger, and when the second bridge was finished no one had eaten for two days. Cortés himself and all his officers were starving, so as a last resource Diaz was sent to forage, and Cortés spoke to his captains and his immediate friends and told them to have trust in God, for soon they would have food. Whether he spoke in desperation or because he thought no one was so likely as was Diaz to find provisions for them, only he himself could tell; but the fact that he said so, pointed clearly to the fact that Diaz had become a man to be relied on by the soldiers in their necessity.

How he procured it he does not tell us, but merely says, "I and three of my friends arrived with a hundred

and thirty loads of maize, of beans and salt, of honey and other viands, besides some eighty hens." He arrived at nightfall; but all the soldiers knew that he was coming, because they knew what he would bring.

When he got to the camp, the hunger-stricken men threw themselves on his mules, and in a trice devoured all that he had brought, and did not leave a morsel either for Sandoval or for Cortés. In spite of everything Diaz could do either by threats or by entreaties, nothing at all was left. When Cortés heard of it, although he was patient in hardships beyond the ordinary race of men, sober and abstemious to a degree, so far had his extreme necessity destroyed his self-control he almost fell into a fit with rage.[1]

Diaz says pawkily enough that Cortés soon saw it was no good to "call out in the desert." So he called Diaz to him and asked him how it was he had allowed the soldiers to throw themselves upon the food and to devour it all as if they had been wolves. Diaz, though of a long-suffering nature, told him roundly that hunger has no law, and that he ought to have sent guards if he had wished that the provisions should not be devoured. He added that in his opinion even if he had gone himself the result would have been the same, for hunger has no law.

When Cortés saw that nothing was to be gained by raging or despair, "as he had much necessity he spoke me fair . . . and said to me, 'O Brother Bernal Diaz del Castillo, if you have any love for me, and if by any chance you left any provisions hidden on the road, for God's sake share them with me, for I am sure, from what I

[1] *Renegaba de la paciencia y pateaba.*

know of you, that you have kept back something for yourself and for your good friend Sandoval.' "

Hunger had brought the greatest conqueror of them all to such a low ebb that he must really have been famishing, at the head of his own army, with power of life and death, but not the power to make a law that starving men should respect convoys of food. Diaz writes: "As I heard his words, and more especially the tone in which he uttered them, I pitied him; and Sandoval said also, 'I swear I have not got even a handful of maize to toast.' . . . Then I deliberated and said, 'We had better go to-night at the drowsy watch,[1] when all the camp is sleeping, and fetch twelve carts of maize and twenty hens, three jars of honey, beans and salt, and bring two Indian women to bake bread . . . and we will go by night, so that the soldiers do not take the food from us. Then we will share between your grace, myself and Sandoval, and my own followers.' . . . Then Cortés asked if the friars had anything to eat, and I answered that God looked better after them than after us, for all the soldiers had given them some of the stolen food." Diaz goes on to say: "I have set this down, so that people may see what hardships even captains have to pass through in discovering new lands, and that Cortés, although we stood in awe of him, could not get even a little maize to eat when he was in the sorest need."

[1] *El quarto de la modorra.* This is the watch before the dawn, *i.e.* from twelve o'clock to four, when sentinels have the most difficulty in keeping awake. Should I chance to have any readers and they should doubt of this, let them try for themselves. An Arabic proverb says, "My donkey's off fore-foot stands in the centre of the world; if anybody doubts this, let him measure for himself."

Sandoval, who was as near to starving as was Cortés, eagerly entered into the scheme (or plot). He went with Diaz, being, as he says, a good deal hungrier than many a common soldier in the host. So did these two celebrated and skilful captains compass a meal, as it were by stealth, in the middle of the army that they led.

Misfortunes dogged the whole course of the expedition, for in addition to the want of food, a conspiracy broke out amongst the Mexicans to kill Cortés and all his officers and to go home to Mexico. Nothing was more natural, for the poor Indians, to the number of three thousand, had been compelled to march, and all the journey had been one long battle, both against enemies and want. Their numbers greatly exceeded that of the Spanish troops, and Cortés had taken with them their ex-king Guatemuz as a hostage for the good behaviour of those left in Mexico.

Guatemuz had been treated cruelly and tortured after Mexico was won to make him tell where he had buried all his gold. Diaz, whilst he reflects in good set terms upon the wickedness of the proceeding, saying that it inflicts a stain upon Cortés that nothing can wipe out, yet holds him partially excused because he was compelled to do it by the soldiers, who were afire for gold.

In the present instance he makes no excuse, and says that Cortés, having heard upon the testimony of two other chiefs that Guatemuz was at the head of the conspiracy, had him hung instantly without an inquiry into any proofs. The execution was carried out at once, two friars preaching at him to the last, through

an interpreter. Whether the comforting words of Holy Writ, through a third person, were likely to compose a man for death, who no doubt looked upon them as but the hypocritical pretence of tyrants to save his soul whilst they destroyed his body, no one can tell, and Bernal Diaz was too good a Catholic to entertain any speculation of the kind. However, he preserves the dying words of Guatemuz: "Captain Malinche," he said, with the halter round his neck, "it is a long time since I understood all that you said was false and that you always meant to kill me. Fool that I was not to have killed myself when I lost Mexico. I die against all justice. God will demand from you a rigorous account."

So died the unlucky Guatemuz, who did all that a man could do to save his country, in the flower of his youth. Diaz says, "for an Indian," that he was a good Catholic. One hopes it was not so, and that the Spaniards who took away his kingdom and his life could not enslave his soul. The "for an Indian" leaves a loophole open for those who think that nothing, even the hope of paradise itself, with its celestial choirs or bands of houris, is no excuse for sending anyone with all his sins upon him hot-foot to enjoy its charms against his will, as was the case with Guatemuz. If he conspired, he certainly was well within his natural rights, both as a Mexican and as a man.

Diaz says openly, "This was the death they gave him, most unjustly, and it seemed wrong to all of us." His frankness does him honour, and his remark, "I grieved for Guatemuz and for his cousin,[1] for I had

[1] The Chief of Tacuba, who was living with him.

known them both when they were great and powerful and they had honoured us in many things."[1]

It appears as if Cortés, who by this time must have had many and heavy burdens on his conscience, was oppressed by remorse. Diaz says that he could not sleep or rest, partly because of all the troubles of the road, partly because he pondered on the death of Guatemuz. As every day both Mexicans and Spaniards were perishing of hardships and of want, he grew morose. One night, oppressed by sleeplessness, he rose, and after walking up and down a room which had an open door, and must have been a kind of oratory, for there were idols in it, he fell, and rolling down the steps hurt himself severely in the head. Either from shame, or because he feared the soldiers would take the occurrence as an evil omen, he said nothing of it, but, as Diaz says, "got himself healed the best way that he could."

Some people—Judas Iscariot, for example—have killed themselves, overweighed by remorse. Cortés probably never had the least idea of doing so, but one is glad to hear he suffered from the most useless of all human passions, yet the one that makes men suffer what are the real pains of hell. The expedition struggled on, passing through incalculable hardships, feeding on game of all kinds, when they got it, and now and then catching great lizards, "that taste very good" (with hunger sauce), till it was almost Easter Day. "What sort of Easter, oh dear readers, could we have,

[1] Gómara in his history approves the execution of Guatemuz, but then Gómara wrote long after the event, and only saw Cortés as a hero, whereas Diaz knew him both as a hero and a man.

with not a bite to eat?" Diaz says ruefully. Once more they were reduced to the direst straits, and again Cortés sent Diaz out to scour the country in search of food. Diaz seems (as we all are) often to have been plagued with fools. Just as he was about to start out on his foraging expedition, a foolish captain and a babbler,[1] Pedro de Ircio, besought Cortés to send him in command. Cortés, who never answered No when Yes saved trouble, said to him, "Go, in God's name"; but Diaz, who knew Ircio, and that he was no good at marching, protested strongly, saying the man would be a hindrance to him, and Cortés this time altered his Yes to No.

So should a wise and prudent captain deal with fools, for men in general care little about deeds, but resent words, especially when they are true, to the last moment of their lives.

A thousand Mexicans followed the soldiers who went out foraging, hoping to get enough to eat. As fortune willed it, Diaz fell accidentally upon an Indian village in which he found some huts all full of maize. The thousand Mexicans were loaded up with it like pack-horses, and once again the camp was saved through Bernal Diaz's efforts in its extremity. The constant foraging and the exposure to the sun had given Diaz a sharp touch of fever, and he excused himself from going out again to look for guides; so Cortés sent out three parties, one of them under the same Pedro de Ircio (who talked so much), to see what they could do. Three days they wandered in the woods, and then returned again, half starved and without finding any guides.

[1] *Pedro de Ircio que hablaba mucho.*

Diaz at first was loth to go again, as he was weak and ill; but Cortés sent Sandoval to him, saying "that after God, Bernal Diaz alone could save them."

"Even though I was ill," he says, "I could not now refuse for shame, so I went with Hernando de Aguilar and a certain Hinojosa, men who knew what it was to suffer hardships." At sunset they came quite unexpectedly upon a village, and laying hands (necessity, like hunger, knows no law) upon three Indians, they bore them off to act as guides. "We came back to the camp contented, and when Sandoval heard of it (for he was waiting anxiously for us beside the road), he went half wild with joy. We went before Cortés, who was more delighted than if they had given him something good."[1]

Then Sandoval rather unkindly said to Ircio, "You see that Bernal Diaz was quite right when he said only good walkers ought to go with him, and everybody laughed." After all their difficulties, at last news came to Cortés of what had happened to Christobal de Oli. How the news reached them is an instance of how much stranger fact is than fiction, for Cortés was wandering southward, guided but by the compass and by such guides as he could get, generally secured by force, as Diaz had secured them when he went out with his two friends. One day the expedition reached a well-inhabited Indian village, and in its idol-house they found an old red cap and a worn Spanish hemp-soled shoe[2] hung up as an offering to their gods.

[1] *Que lo tuvó en mas, que se le dicran otra buena cosa.*

[2] *En una casa de idolos se halló un bonete viejo colorado y un alpargate.*

So in the middle of the trackless wilds, which never had been trodden by white men, they came upon a sure and certain sign that other Spaniards must be within hail of them.

Cortés at once sent for some Indians and asked them how far off the Spaniards were encamped. The answer was "Two days." "None of us knew," said Diaz, "that there was any other captain in the land except Oli," for they had no idea he had been executed. Cortés above all things was anxious to take Oli alive and execute him as an example to other captains who might be thinking of rebellion, for he believed in scotching treason in the bud.[1]

Sandoval, with six Spaniards and several Indians, was sent out to try either to capture or get news of Christobal de Oli. They set out, following the coast, in several canoes, and it fell out that in the early morning they came upon two Spanish soldiers gathering *zapotes*[2] in a tall tree. These men were terrified when they saw Sandoval and his soldiers in the canoes. Sandoval reassured them, and they told him all the news—how that Gil Gonzalez de Avila had been sent as Governor of the territory of Golfo Dulce, and had built a town called Buenavista on the rivers Pechin and Balania,[3] just where the latter falls into the sea.

[1] Compare the methods of Porfirio Diaz, and one sees that the Mexicans are only acting from heredity and have no special dose of inborn sin. Envy is as natural a thing with them as hypocrisy is to the English and Americans. One wonders how far that holds true of Australasia.

[2] The *zapote* is called, I think, Sweet Zapota in English. No one knows why, for it is not especially sweet. It is the *Achras Mammosa* of Botany.

[3] It is not easy to identify the places that Cortés passed by; but as there is a Cerro de San Gil near the Gulf of Amatique in Guatemala, it is possible it was near that gulf that Gil Gonzalez built his town.

They told how Oli had been beheaded, and announced that they were faithful to Cortés. Sandoval was naturally delighted with the news, and sent a messenger back to the camp at once. Diaz says, pathetically, "Cortés and all of us were overjoyed, for we thought that we had passed through the worst of all our troubles," and at last it seemed that they were safe. However, it was not so, and they had greater trials to endure. Diaz, always avid to seize upon the little details that only he and Froissart ever seem to have perceived, informs us that Cortés was so delighted that he gave the bearer of the good news, a soldier called Alonso Ortiz, "a good, roan horse that we called 'Moor's Head,' and we all gave him something of the little that we had."

Cortés at once crossed the Golfo Dulce in a canoe, and went to the new town of Buenavista. The army had to march by land, experiencing great hardships. Diaz says, just as if it were an ordinary thing in those days, that they were four days waiting to pass one river, "and had no food, not even in imagination,[1] except some berries that grew upon a little palm."

When they arrived at Buenavista they found the inhabitants totally without provisions, even for themselves. Nothing remained to do but to push farther on, and so Cortés sent out his soldiers in various directions, and he himself marched resolutely to the south. Diaz does not appear to have taken such a prominent part in these forays or expeditions, for they soon reached

[1] *Y de comer ni por pensamiento.* The phrase may be rendered, "It was no use even thinking of food," but it is one of the phrases impossible to give the effect of in translation.

territories in which provisions were more abundant, and his peculiar gifts for foraging seem not to have been required. Cortés himself embarked in a ship that came with stores for Gil Gonzalez, and sailed to Truxillo, a port which probably he named himself after one of the towns in Estremadura, in which province his family had property. This port exists under the same name down to the present day.

From thence he sent a ship to Santo Domingo, telling of all that he had done, and asking the Council[1] of the King to send him stores and horses, as he was building a new town. This was the first news of his expedition that had reached the outer world for eighteen months, and Diaz says that everyone in Mexico "believed we had all perished," a belief natural enough considering the great distance they had marched.

By this time Pedro[2] Arias de Avila, the Governor of Nicaragua, had got wind that Cortés had arrived close to his territory. Cortés and Pedro Arias de Avila were not men likely to agree. Each of them thought America just large enough for his own exertions, but with little territory to spare to anyone on earth.

At this particular juncture Pedro Arias was most unpopular, on account of his judicial murder of Balboa. One Francisco Hernandez was in rebellion against him, and wished to be made governor of Nicaragua. This Hernandez sent a captain called Pedro de Garro with a small following to ask for help from Cortés in his rebellion. Diaz and Sandoval, who were out scouting, which seems to have been their usual occupation, fell

[1] *Real Audiencia.*

[2] Often referred to (but never by Diaz) as Pedrarias Davila.

on this captain and his men and took them prisoners, and took them to Cortés in the new city of Truxillo, that he was building on the coast. Diaz and Sandoval went with them, all of them on foot and miserable.

After much wandering about the woods they neared Truxillo just about vesper time. As they advanced, hungry and wretched, they saw five men on horseback coming towards them at a walk.

As they drew near they recognised Cortés, but so much altered by the hardships he had undergone that he seemed like a ghost. Getting off his horse, with the tears standing in his eyes, he said, "Brothers and comrades, how glad I am to see you are alive. . . ." "He was so thin that it was sad to look at him, and we learned he had been at the point of death with fever and with anxiety, for he knew nothing of what was going on in Mexico, and others told us that he had been so near to death that they had got a habit of the Franciscan Order made with which to bury him.[1] . . . Then all together on foot we went on to the town, and lodged and supped with him, and he was so poor that we had not even enough *cazabe*[2] to fill our bellies with."

To such a state had come the leader of the proud army that had set out from Mexico eighteen months before, with music, tumblers, discharges of artillery, and all the pomp and show of glorious war. Worse than his poverty and all he had to undergo was the fact that for the first and only time in his adventurous career his

[1] It was very common in the Spain of those days for men to be buried in this habit. Cervantes and many others were so interred.

[2] *Cazabe*, in English, cassava. It is flour made from the root of the plant *Jatropha Maniot.*

nerve had failed him and he had become irresolute. For all that, like a gallant horse hard-ridden and brought low, at the first touch of better circumstances his spirit soon revived. He read the letter of Hernandez and promised him his help, although, as Diaz says, he had not food enough to eat. As Sandoval and Diaz sat talking to Cortés after their miserable meal, they saw a vessel coming into port. It brought a few provisions and a letter to Cortés.

The letter was from the Licentiate Zuazo, whom Cortés had left to watch over his affairs in Mexico. As the Licentiate wrote from the Habana, Cortés must have been surprised even before he broke the seal. When he did so and read the letter, consternation fell upon him.

He who had been unbroken by all the horror of the Noche Triste, and had withstood the long-drawn-out suffering of the last fruitless eighteen months' adventure, which had left him broken in fortune, health, and reputation, broke down, and taking up the letter went to his room, in which Diaz says he heard him sobbing all the night. Next day (a Saturday, as Diaz carefully sets down) he confessed to a friar, Father John, heard mass, and commulgated. "When mass was over, he asked us to draw near, and read the letter to us."

By it they learned that long ago they had been given up for dead. In Mexico their property had been sold at auction, their Indians given to others, even their wives forcibly married to Spaniards newly come from Spain. Diaz was not a married man at that time, and perhaps on that account this special outrage moved him to greater fury than the rest. This was the first of the bad news,

but there was worse to come. In Spain the Emperor had been won over by their enemies, and had not his staunch friend, the Duke of Bejar,[1] ventured his head and his estate in favour of his friend, Cortés would have been made a prisoner at the first opportunity and sent home to be tried.

All vacant posts in Mexico had been given to his enemies, and all his friends, including the Licentiate Zuazo, either been put in prison or exiled from the land. Even Narvaez, whom he had routed, and who had lived more than a year with him in honourable captivity and treated as a guest, had been rewarded for his incompetency with a new government.

Poor Diaz says when Cortés had read the letter to the end we were all sad and angry, partly with Cortés himself, who had brought such evil luck upon us, and partly with the Royal Factor. This Royal Factor had always been an enemy, and when Cortés was absent for so many months he was prime mover against all his friends.

"We cursed them both" (says Diaz) "with two thousand maledictions, and our hearts almost burst with rage. Cortés could not control his tears, and with the letter in his hand shut himself up in his own room and did not come out till the middle of next day."

Having cursed him and so relieved their feelings, they became alarmed when he refused to see them; for though they owed all their misfortunes to him, they felt the only chance they had of getting righted was solely by his means.

"So we implored him to embark at once with all of

[1] *Puso su estado y cabeza por Cortés.*

us in the three ships which were there and return back to the New Spain." Cortés, who was brought low with fever and the bad news he had received, answered them "gently and lovingly," but he refused to follow their advice. Although his resolution for the time was broken, his head was just as cool as ever, and as ready with a scheme.

What he determined was to embark alone with a few friends, land secretly in Mexico, and then to show himself after the fashion of Napoleon when he left Elba and rallied his old friends. Diaz and Sandoval and Captain Luis Marin he told to follow him by land; and to make friends with his near neighbours, he wrote a letter to Captain Hernandez promising him his help in his dispute with Pedro Arias about the governorship. Diaz, who had been now nearly two years upon the road, begged piteously to accompany Cortés, saying that in all his hardships and his fights he had been always by his side. "Then he embraced me[1] and said, 'My son, if you go with me, who will be left with your friend Sandoval? I promise, and I will pawn my beard to keep my word, that I will keep you in my memory and do you a good turn.'"

It is probable on this occasion that Diaz heaped more than two thousand maledictions on his head, though he says nothing of it, but tells us in passing that seeing Cortés was so melancholy a certain Rodrigo Mañuco, in order to divert him,[2] laid a wager that in full

[1] Cortés, like other leaders, seldom embraced a man but when he was refusing a request.

[2] It is curious what strange things come into people's heads in order to amuse sick men—or women. A friend of mine, whilst lying ill with influenza, and no doubt looking dazed and bored, provoked the pity of her

armour he would run right to the top of a new house that stood upon a hill. This he attempted, but killed himself in the attempt.[1]

Cortés embarked, whilst Bernal Diaz with Sandoval and all the war-worn expedition began their march on the back trail to Mexico. Then began one of the strangest chapters in the history of Cortés, and one in which Diaz played a great part and brought to bear all the inherent strength of his strong, unimaginative character.

Hardly had Cortés set sail than a great storm got up which twice running drove him back to the new town of Truxillo which he had just begun to build. The second time his nerve, already shaken by the fever and the hardships he had undergone, broke down completely. What happened then Diaz tells in his own inimitable style, which those who read it may put down to a sly sense of humour or to naïve faith, just as it strikes them; for Diaz gives us no indication of his mind.

Upon arriving at the port "broken down by the sea,"[2] he caused a friar who was with him "to say mass to the Holy Ghost,[3] and make procession and pray to God our Lord and to the Blessed Virgin that they should guide him in what was fittest for their holy service; and it appeared the Holy Spirit gave him light,

French maid from Arles to such a point that, calling to her husband the butler, she remarked, "Nous allons faire la course Landaise pour égayer Madame," and sticking some horns into her husband's head (which may have been growing there unperceived before) said, "Jean, tu feras la vache." The two then proceeded to run and jump about the room till my friend thought she was the victim of a delirious dream.

[1] *Y subiendo armado, reventó y murió dello.*

[2] *De la mar.*

[3] *Que dijere Misa al Espiritu Santo.*

not to go any more upon his journey, but to remain and conquer all the land."

The Holy Spirit as a conqueror is a new view, but Diaz does not see anything unusual in it, for he goes on to say: "Therefore without delaying for a minute, he (Cortés) sent after us three messengers riding full speed[1] to catch us on the road to Mexico . . . begging us to go no farther, but to remain and conquer and possess the land, because his guardian angel had enlightened him and put it in his mind, and so he had determined to remain."

Most naturally, upon receipt of this informal communication of the wishes of the Holy Ghost, Diaz and all the rest were furious. "We could not suffer it, and cursed him a thousand times; and then we said to Captain Sandoval that he might stay and settle if he liked, but as for us . . . we would go back to the great city we had won."

Sandoval, who loved Cortés "as he had been his father," besought them to wait for a few days till he could send back letters to Cortés. Unwillingly they waited, and an answer came that looks as if for the time Cortés had been unsettled in his mind. Instead of begging them to wait for him, or at least writing civilly, he sent abusing all who refused to settle in the land, and in a postscript said "that if they did not wish to obey his orders, that there were plenty soldiers in Castile."

They wrote again, and in the letter the hand of Diaz seems to manifest itself, setting forth all their sufferings in his cause and finishing by parodying his

[1] *A matacaballo*—literally "at kill-horse speed."

postscript with the remark that if there were plenty soldiers in Castile, in Mexico there was good store of governors and those who would reward their soldiers better than Cortés. They also begged him once more to embark, saying they would return by land and meet him. Still they all had so much respect for him that they tried one more effort, and sent back Captain Sandoval to reason with him.

When Sandoval arrived at the wretched little town, Cortés was glad to see him, but he refused to go on board the ship. Diaz was furious, for with his downright character, all cut out of one piece, he could not bear irresolution. Moreover, he had material grounds for his bad humour, as his friend Sandoval had insisted on changing horses with him. His own was a good horse both for the road and war, and had cost him six hundred dollars, whilst the horse he got from Sandoval, he hints, was of but little value, and even as it was Diaz got little use of him, for he was soon killed in a fight.

Horse-dealing between friends seems from the beginning of the world to have been a doubtful blessing, especially in time of war, and when one of the parties to the deal is of inferior rank.

Cortés at last determined to send a ship to Mexico, although he still refused to go on board himself, alleging, perhaps with reason, that as his enemies were all in power, they would be sure to kill him if they could get him in their toils. Whether he had the same celestial authority for his belief Diaz does not inform us; but taking all things into consideration, he acted prudently.

In the ship went a certain Martin de Orantes, a faithful servant and a man on whom he could rely.

This man took letters for Pedro de Alvarado and others of his friends. The first thing was to assure his old companions and fellow-conquerors that he was still alive, for many people thought Cortés and all the expedition had been lost.

The ship put into a little port between Panuco[1] and Vera Cruz. There, only Orantes disembarked, and the ship went on and anchored in the Panuco River. Martin de Orantes changed his clothes and dressed himself as a countryman, and set out on his long walk on foot. Diaz says he was a first-rate walker (*era suelto peon*)—and he had need to be for such a journey in those days. When he passed by a town where there were Spaniards, he lodged with the Indians so as to pass unknown, although he did not need to take such precautions, as it was two years and three months since he had left Mexico, and he had grown a beard.

Walking all day and the greater part of every night, he got to Mexico on the fourth day from when he left the ship. So Diaz, when he says Orantes was a first-rate man upon his feet, spoke truly, for to perform the feat he must have covered sixty miles a day. Orantes came by night to the Convent of San Francisco, and found there Jorge de Alvarado, Andres de Tapia, and many of the old conquerors and companions of Cortés.

"When they saw Orantes, and knew Cortés was still alive and saw his letters, they could not keep still on their feet with joy, but danced and jumped about the room. Even the friars, and amongst them men so grave and serious as Fray Toribio Motolinea and others, jumped for joy and then gave thanks to God."

[1] The Panuco River falls into the sea at Tampico.

Then they shut fast the monastery doors for fear that traitors, of which breed Diaz says there was great store, should tell the Factor Salazár, who had imprisoned all those favourable to Cortés and had usurped his power.

At daybreak all the old conquerors, with Fray Toribio Motolinea, the Royal Treasurer, and the Accountant Albornoz, with all their followers, carrying Orantes with them, so that the people all should see him, went to the house of Factor Salazár, calling out, "Long live the King, and long live Hernando Cortés, who is alive and coming back to us." The sight of the old conquerors all armed and ready, made such an effect upon the soldiers of the Factor, mostly men just arrived from Spain, that they deserted in a body, and the Factor was taken and imprisoned in a cage. All Mexico poured out to see Orantes and to hear about Cortés. Then his friends wrote at once to Pedro de Alvarado, who was in Guatemala, to tell him the good news, and as Cortés was not so far from his government, to send at once and force him to come home

Then the next thing they did only would have occurred to Spaniards, and to Spaniards of those days. The wives of many of the soldiers of Cortés had been obliged to marry other men, as it was given out their husbands all had perished with him. Only one woman, Juana Mansilla, had refused, saying that she was certain that her husband was alive. The Factor, after having tried to break her will by threats and penalties, had her accused of witchcraft and imprisoned her. The conquerors, with all the captains and the friars, went to the prison where she lay, mounted

and dressed up in their best, with flags all flying and the bands playing a triumphal march. The Royal Treasurer took her behind him on his horse, saying that she had acted like a Roman matron, and in procession they took her round the town. Then when the function was concluded, they agreed from that day forward that she should be styled Doña Juana de Mansilla, for she had been a common soldier's wife, differing in nothing from the other women of her class, but in interior grace.

A friar, Altamirano, was dispatched by sea to bring Cortés back to his friends, and landed at Truxillo, where he found him still ill and still irresolute. At first nothing would induce him to embark, for he had been so buffeted and tossed about on his two previous attempts that he had got a horror of the sea.

At last, when Sandoval came back and he had read the letters from his friends, he took fresh courage, and entering the ship, to which he was carried through the surf by his men, after having received the sacrament, sailed to the Habana, where he rested a few days and then crossed with a few friends to the port of Medellin,[1] only a little way from Vera Cruz. They chanced upon a lot of horses being driven to the port, and mounting one of them, Cortés arrived in Vera Cruz, and went at once into the church. As it was very early in the morning, the sacristan, a man just come from Spain, seeing his church invaded by a crowd of men dirty and travel-stained and all unknown to him, ran out and

[1] Although the wind was fair, the passage took twenty days—not a short time, if judged by our ideas ; but time was what they had the most of in those days.

called for help. The neighbours turned out armed, and as Cortés, who was all dressed in white, which in the voyage had been stained and dirtied, and he himself was thin and ill and wore his hair and beard long and untrimmed, they did not know him till he spoke to them. Then they all pressed about him to welcome him and kiss his hand, and after resting, he set out upon the road to Mexico.

In all the towns the people welcomed him with dances and with song, especially in Tlascala, where he had left so many Indian friends who had fought with him at the Conquest. When he arrived in Mexico, all the inhabitants met him with music, whilst the Indians covered the lake with their canoes and went through a sham fight, "in the same way," says Diaz, "as they once fought with us in the times of Guatemuz."

Naturally, he went first to the monastery of San Francisco to hear mass and to give thanks to God for having brought him safe back to Mexico after so many perils on the road. So in the month of June of the year 1524 (or 1525, as Diaz says) he rested from his toils.

His expedition in one sense was a failure, for it accomplished nothing of a material kind. He found no gold mines, conquered no great towns, lost a full third of all his men, wasted his treasure, and returned home broken in health and almost penniless. Yet he had performed a feat which in the annals of such matters sets him in the highest rank of all the captains of the world. The record of those fifteen hundred miles through swamps and deserts, amidst impenetrable jungle, and across mountains never before pressed by the foot of

man; the constant fighting, the struggle with the deadly climate, and the bridging deep and furious rivers, must endure whilst courage, patience, and contempt of hardships still excite the admiration of mankind.[1]

[1] In this expedition in the country of the Mazotecas, after passing the Puerto del Alabastro, Cortés left his good black horse (*mi caballo morzillo*), as he tells the Emperor in his fifth letter. The horse had run a splinter into his foot. Cortés says, "I left him to the Chief, who promised to look after him and cure him, but I do not know what he will do with him." Cortés would indeed have been more of a necromancer than a conqueror could he have foreseen his horse's destiny.

# CHAPTER XV

Cortés was safely back in Mexico; but Diaz still had to retrace some fifteen hundred miles, uncertain of what sort of a reception he might receive when he arrived. Diaz had been left in a place called Naco, whilst Sandoval had gone off to Truxillo to reason with Cortés. Time passed, and they received no news; and finally a captain called Marmolejo set off with ten picked mounted soldiers, of whom Diaz himself was one. When they heard that Cortés had gone to Mexico they were overjoyed, and at once started back for Naco, where the body of the expedition lay under Captain Luis Marin. Diaz says, "We threw stones at the ground we left behind"; but whether this is to be taken literally, or merely that their horses galloped so fast that they kicked back the stones, he does not stop to say.[1]

When they had joined Luis Marin, they all set off on their long march, and in a day or two encountered six soldiers of Pedro de Alvarado's. One of these was a friend of Diaz; his name was "Diego de Villanueva," a Conqueror, a good soldier, and one of the founders of this city of Guatemala, a native of Villanueva de la Serena, which is in the jurisdiction of Alcantara."

This is one of the little touches in which Diaz abounds, and shows us indirectly that this James (Diego)

[1] *Y acuedome que tiramos piedras á la tierra que dejabamos atras.*

really had no surname, but was known only as James, the man from Villanueva. "When we recognised each other, we embraced."[1] Diaz learned that Pedro de Alvarado was not far off, and that with a large following he was coming to search for Cortés. In two days' journey they joined Alvarado, and he was overjoyed when he received the news that Cortés had returned to Mexico.

As they marched on by way of Guatemala—for Alvarado wanted to reduce (pacify) a rebellious tribe—Diaz says that they experienced an earthquake. His is, I think, the first account of the phenomenon in the history of the New World. "I remember that as we were marching down a hill the ground began to tremble so that many of the soldiers fell, for the earthquake lasted for some time." He takes it just as he takes all incidents by flood and field, as being part and parcel of a soldier's life. No doubt he said "it came from God," just as an Arab or a Scottish Presbyterian (old style) would have done, without expatiating on the peril he had run, being certain that if it was God's will he should escape, he naturally escaped, and had no need either to criticise or bless. As their chief wish was to arrive in Mexico, because they did not know what might have happened to Cortés, they did not join the army which Alvarado had in winter quarters near Guatemala, but travelling on by forced marches, came to Tehuantepec, and thence by post to Guaxaca, where they heard all the news.

[1] This "embrace" is not the kiss on the cheek of the Frenchman, but the Oriental and Scriptural embrace, in which men hold one another for a moment and look over each other's shoulder. It is not an undignified *geste*. A kiss on the cheek between men would in Spain be held only fit for *Gabachos* to indulge in.

At last they reached a town called Chalco, close to Mexico. In all they numbered about eighty, for many had been left upon the road, many had settled down in various places, and not a few had wandered off into the woods, and probably had died of hunger or had been killed by Indians. Between three or four hundred Spanish soldiers had set out with Cortés, and of these it seems only these eighty had survived to enter Mexico.[1]

Diaz tells how they sent to tell Cortés they were so near, and that they all were ragged, ill-fed, and war-worn after their two long years of hardships and of fights.

Next day Cortés came out to meet them, with all the Conquerors that he could muster, and after a great banquet they were solemnly received into the city that so few years before they had all helped to win.

Diaz went to the house of Captain Luis Marin, who gave him clothes "and everything that a man could desire." This expedition was the last great feat of arms in which Diaz was occupied, though till his dying day he seems to have been constantly employed fighting and "pacifying."[2] From that time onward Diaz found himself respected, but still lacking advancement, a man who by his honesty and by his great experience of the

[1] Juan Villagutierre Soto Mayer, in his *Conquista de el Itza* (Madrid, 1701), says Cortés had four hundred Spanish soldiers with him on his expedition to Honduras.

[2] It seems needless to explain the meaning of the Spanish word *pacificar*, for its English, French, German, and Italian equivalents can be seen almost every day in newspapers that treat of the "civilisation" of Africa.

country was often in request to give advice or to decide on matters which entailed sound judgment; in fact, he was too upright[1] and too little self-seeking to make a figure in the political intrigues which laid the foundation of the subsequent centuries of turmoil in the country and eventually broke the heart of Cortés and drove him to his grave.

Mexico had fallen into complete confusion during the two years' absence of the expedition. The various officers of the Crown had set themselves against the older Conquerors, and everyone who had a grudge against Cortés took the occasion for revenge.

So much disturbed was everything that Diaz and others feared Cortés would be assassinated, and several of the Conquerors advised him to live in greater state, have himself called "My Lord," and go out with a canopy carried above his head. Diaz does not say whether he concurred in their advice, which was proposed by Diego de Ordas, one of the most prudent of the Conquerors.

What he does say reveals the inner workings of his mind and the innate nobility of soul that shows itself in fifty little touches of the kind.

"When I have talked about Cortés," he says, "I have never called him Don Hernando Cortés, or Marquis (as he was afterwards), nor even Captain, only Cortés and nothing more.[2] My reason was that he himself was pleased to be called only Cortés . . . just

[1] "*Los sinceros son amados pero engañados*," says Gracian in his *Arte de Prudencia*, *i.e.* "Sincere men are loved, but they are taken in."

[2] *A boca llena*—frankly, roundly, or simply. Literally, "with a full mouth," *i.e.* able to say nothing more but the one word.

as the Romans used to say Cæsar or Pompey . . . and the Carthaginians, Hannibal."

The passage shows that Bernal had thought out the guinea stamp,[1] centuries before Burns; but then, the Castilian and the Scot have much in common. Both of them are "pawky," and the phrase "Que hombre," can alone be rendered by "Hoot mon." Mexican politics seem to have been the same in the green tree as they are in the serer leaf of modern times. Things having got to such a pass that Cortés could only govern at the price of revolution, he agreed to retire on the consideration that the King's Treasurer and Sandoval were named joint-governors.

As Sandoval was, after Alvarado, his most trusted captain, he thus continued, we may suppose, to have a pretty fair share of the government in his own hands, whilst he professed to stand aside. As it is always most annoying on an Indian frontier to see men who know nothing of such matters put in command, so Bernal Diaz is moved as an old Conqueror to write down an adventure that cost a tender-foot captain his life. The Treasurer, it appears, sent out to pacify[2] certain wild Indians in the south. "So that he (the Treasurer) might bring these Indians more easily to peace,[3] he

[1] The Arabs, who have nothing that corresponds to our empty titles (after all, a title is but a word that stands between a man and his nobility), but who are well aware of the importance of wealth, once asked me, when Kaid M'Lean was knighted, if he had received any money with the honour. When I answered No, they were astonished and said, "Honours of that kind do not deplete a Sultan's treasury."

[2] Word as before, and now.

[3] *Para que mejor los pudiera atraer de paz.* This is simply "pacify" writ large, as is the case with priest and presbyter.

sent a certain Barrios, who said he had been a captain in Italy and was very brave. This man had just arrived from Spain . . . the Treasurer gave him somewhere about a hundred soldiers, and amongst them many harquebusiers and crossbowmen. When this captain with his soldiers had arrived at the towns of the Zapotecas . . . one night the Indians of those towns suddenly attacked him and his soldiers so unexpectedly that Captain Barrios and seven of his men were slain, and all the rest were wounded; so that if they had not suddenly run off . . . none of them would have escaped. By this the difference between old conquerors and those who have but newly come from Spain, and who know nothing about Indian warfare, is made manifest. With this, the 'conquest' of this Barrios came to an end."

If such a thing as a man well skilled in Boer tactics chanced to exist during the late war, I can imagine him writing much in the vein of Diaz about the exploits of some General Stellenbosch.

When Captain Barrios and two other captains, who, as Diaz said, "did not know how to conquer," had tried and failed, he had to go himself, and after suffering many hardships, "brought those Indians to peace." His methods probably were not gentle, although he was not a bloodthirsty man; but then, strange as it may appear, there are no gentle methods of the least avail in the pacification of men whose lands are taken from them by "conquerors," whether those conquerors come from England or from Spain.

Cortés having received letters that his father, Don Martin Cortés, was dead, and as his affairs in Mexico

were in confusion, after having confessed and received the sacrament, embarked at Vera Cruz for Spain.

As God so willed it, he had a favourable voyage, and in one-and-forty days arrived at Palos, close to Our Lady of La Rabida. Sandoval went with him; but his vigorous constitution had been undermined by all that he had undergone, both at the siege of Mexico and in the expedition to Honduras and to Yucatan. When he arrived at Palos he put up at the house of a ropemaker, who robbed him of the gold he had brought with him, when all his servants happened to be out. Sandoval saw him, but dared not say anything, as he was weak and ill, and he feared that the man might strangle him or smother him as he lay helpless in his bed. To such a pass was brought the finest horseman of the Conquerors in the flower of his age—to see himself robbed by a coward, and afraid to say a word. So he lost all the gold for which he had put his life so often in such peril, just as Cortés lost all the jewels that he had taken from the Emperor Montezuma in the disastrous rout before Algiers. It almost looks as if there were a destiny that sometimes overtakes men—that is, men such as were Cortés and Sandoval; for your smug hypocrite and cheat usually goes honoured to his grave. Cortés, when he heard of the ill plight of Sandoval, came to him on the spur and learned about the theft. He remained and watched by his friend; but there was still a sterner conqueror upon the watch. Death took him, after confession, devout and resolute, and he died with his great friend and captain impotent to aid him, though they had helped each other in so many fights. Cortés, we may be

sure, mourned him sincerely, as of all his captains Sandoval alone had always stood by him and followed him faithfully in good and evil fortune, not servilely—for Sandoval was a man of character and parts—but with true loyalty.

The Emperor Charles v., Diaz says, "mourned him," for he had notice of his generous personality."[1] Perhaps of all the Conquerors no one deserved the description so well as he. Pedro de Alvarado was proud and wilful; Christobal de Oli, though a stout fighter, showed himself ungrateful and a traitor; and the other captains were in the main mere soldiers and men who above all loved gold, except perhaps Captain Luis Marin, a just and honourable man.

Sandoval, as Diaz says, was not an avaricious man. In him Diaz lost his firmest friend and comrade under arms. Pedro de Alvarado was too ambitious to be the friend of such a simple man as Diaz, Cortés too much removed from him in rank; and besides this, the rest of the great captain's life was bound in quicksands and in shoals. Diaz embalms his friend and his good horse Motilla in some of his most characteristic prose. "Captain Gonzalo de Sandoval" (he says) "was a brave man, and he would be about two-and-twenty years of age when he came to Mexico. . . . He was of a good stature and well-proportioned, of reasonable size and muscular; his chest was full and broad, as were his shoulders, and his legs a little bowed. His face was rather full, and his hair and beard were chestnut coloured. His voice was not very clear, but rather hollow-sounding, and he lisped a little. He was

[1] *Tenia noticia de su generosa persona. Persona* in this instance is, I think, best rendered "personality."

not a learned man, although well educated, nor was he careful about getting gold, but chiefly of his duty as a good captain. In all the wars that we had in the New Spain, he always took great care of his soldiers and helped and favoured them. Rich clothes he never wore, but dressed quite plainly as befits a soldier." As Cortés said of him that he might have been one of the best commanders in all Spain if he had not died before his time—for he was only thirty-one when he expired in Palos—he might have done great things, and probably would have passed on to the Conquest of Peru. Like Cortés, Pizarro, Soto, and so many others of the Conquerors, he came from Estremadura, and was born in Medellin.

Besides these natural advantages, he had another which came to him by fortune, for he was owner of the good horse Motilla, whose memory Diaz preserves for us, just as he did that of his owner, in his best style. "He had the best and fleetest horse and the best bitted, for he turned as well on one side as on the other,[1] and men said that they had never seen a better either in the Indies or in Spain. His colour was a dark bay, with a star on the forehead, and a near foot white, and he was called Motilla.[2]

[1] A horse's mouth is an essential in countries where men ride in the discharge of their daily vocations, and not for pleasure, as we ride at home. To-day a good mouth is hardly ever seen in England, because no need of it is ever felt. Even a polo pony turns like a collier that carries weather-helm, beside a cattle horse, either in Australia or in America, amongst the Arabs or the Cossacks of the Don. Most horses, even the best bitted, turn better upon one side than upon the other, and hence the merit of the incomparable horse once owned by Sandoval.

[2] Motilla means a little tuft. Unluckily, Diaz, like Homer, nods on this occasion, and does not tell us where the tuft was situated.

Now, when there is any discussion about the goodness of a horse, they say he is as good as was Motilla."

The Conquerors, when they had taken Mexico, were in two minds whether with the golden sun and silver moon, the emeralds and the feather clothes, they ought to send Motilla to the Emperor Charles v. If they had done so, no doubt Charles, as a prince of light-horsemen, would have prized the gift.

With the death of Sandoval, Diaz lost touch with Cortés, and from henceforth only relates his doings from afar, as an historian and not a comrade. He himself was gradually becoming an authority, although he never seems to have received any adequate reward for all his services.

The Emperor Charles v. paid Cortés chiefly in titles and made him Marquis of the Valley, but never would consent to give him any power. On the contrary, he sent out Nuño de Guzman as President of the newly formed Council that was to administer the affairs of Mexico. His first official act was to make out a register of all the Indians in every province, and Diaz says that at the time he chanced to be in Mexico, as representative of the town of Guacocualco (Goatzocoalcos). When he heard the order of the President that every town should send two representatives, he returned post haste to acquaint his fellow-townsmen of the fact. Their choice fell upon him and on Captain Luis Marin, one of his oldest friends and comrades in the late expedition to the south.

This counting of the Indians led to perpetual

quarrels, and in one of them Diaz and several of the old Conquerors were imprisoned, and sentenced to be fined. It may have been that he in all these matters was suspected as a partisan of Cortés, who at the time was in Castile, and fallen from favour at the Court. At any rate, Diaz seems to have had a considerable part in this counting and portioning out the Indians, which was, in fact, reducing them to slavery under another name.

Diaz had no objection to receiving Indians in *encomienda*, as it was called, for he often complains his services were unrewarded, and he "had no Indians"; but for all that he never was an advocate of cruelty. Personal slavery seemed as natural to men of his time as wage slavery seems natural to us, and it would be quite as unjust to censure Diaz as it would be to censure a rich manufacturer when he talks of his "hands." In telling of the expedition of Nuño de Guzman to Jalisco, in which he did not take a part himself, Diaz is just as severe in his comments on the cruelty of that official as he was upon Cortés.

The Chief Cazonci did not furnish enough gold to satisfy Guzman, so after having tortured him he had him hung. This Diaz indignantly stigmatises as barbarous and cruel. He says that many of those who were with Guzman in the expedition were disgusted with him. Thus it appears that all humanity did not appear for the first time amongst mankind in the year 1880, as some folks seem to think. After long disputes, the Royal Council found Diaz and the other Conquerors innocent of any crime in having fought against Narvaez, as it was done by orders from

Cortés. He tells us of an ingenious joke played on one of the Emperor's officers who had been sent to try Nuño de Guzman, but had become his friend. Having found out that the officer, a bachelor of laws, was fond of card-playing, they put a pack of cards in one of his loose sleeves. Diaz says that long loose sleeves were then in fashion, especially with lawyers.[1] Having conveyed the cards into the sleeve, they tied a slip-knot, which, as the bachelor was walking in the *plaza* they untied, and let the cards fall in a trail behind him by degrees. When he was told to look behind and see what he was leaving on the ground, he swore that he would be revenged. However, Diaz says, he was so worried by the trick that he fell ill, and then, having got a sharp attack of fever, died, either of the illness or the joke.

This sort of joke savours a little of the camp, and perhaps Diaz himself was author of it, for he recounts it in high glee.

Things having gone wrong again, in still another expedition that Cortés made to discover and to conquer California, in the year 1540, he determined to embark for Spain. By this time his old comrades the first Conquerors were getting scarce, so, as Diaz also had business that he wanted settled at the Court, Cortés asked Diaz to accompany him. No doubt the two old friends would have talked long and fought their battles over had fortune willed it that they should go together; but as it chanced Cortés was wounded

[1] Even to-day they are not quite unknown amongst the gentlemen of the long robe in Spain and other countries. "Tener la manga larga" is a Spanish saying, meaning to take bribes.

in the foot, either in riding at the ring or in the jousts with canes,[1] during some feasts that were being held.

This accident kept Cortés from embarking for two months; but Diaz went, and Cortés came afterwards. Perhaps at Court they saw and spoke to one another for the last time, for Diaz tells in detail all the circumstances of the interview Cortés had with the Emperor. He also tells with pride how at the death of the Empress, he, as an Alderman and the oldest conqueror of Guacualco, put on deep mourning when he arrived in Spain. Cortés when he arrived also put all his followers in mourning, and as it happened that Hernando Pizarro also arrived with a large following from Peru, the courtiers marvelled to see so many people dressed in black, all come from oversea.

The courtiers, always a merry set of wags, called them the Black Peruvian Indians as a joke, for no doubt Mexico and Peru to them were little but two names. Diaz does not appear to have prospered in his business at Court, for he relates that after he had seen Hernando de Pizarro sent to prison,[2] and Guzman exiled, and Cortés still kept on dangling about the Emperor, he returned disgusted to New Spain.

[1] *El juego de cañas* was a sport in which two bands threw canes at each other to simulate javelins. This sport the Spaniards inherited from the Arabs, by whom it was called *Lab-el-jerid*, or cane play. It was always played by horsemen who rode on the Arab saddle *a la gineta*, *i.e.* with short stirrups. When the horse galloped the shortness of the stirrups caused the horsemen to stand up, and leaning back against the high cantle of the Arab saddle, they were able to launch the canes with great force.

[2] Hernando Pizarro was imprisoned in the Castillo de la Mota, in Medina del Campo. It had also been the prison for two years of Cesare Borgia.

Death began to remove most of the Conquerors whom Diaz sailed with at the first Conquest. The next to go was Pedro de Alvarado, who at the time was governor of Guatemala. He died fighting in Jalisco, near a place called Cochitlan. It chanced, as Diaz says, that in the middle of a fight with Indians, the horse of a soldier fell, and rolling down the hill fell upon Alvarado, who was standing giving orders, and crushed him terribly. They bore him in a litter to a town known as La Purificacion, whence in a day or two, after having confessed and commulgated as befits a Christian, he rendered up his soul to God who had created it.

So perished Alvarado, the handsomest and gallantest of all the Conquerors. All the old Conquerors mourned him sincerely, and Diaz must have felt that a page of his own life was now turned down for ever. He says of him: "Don Pedro de Alvarado was a Commandator of Santiago, and Governor of Guatemala, Chiapa, and Honduras. He would be somewhere about thirty-four when he first came to Mexico. Of stature he was of middle size and well proportioned, and his face was cheerful and his expression pleasant. For his good looks the Indians gave him the name of Tonatiah—that is, the Sun. He was active and a good rider, and above all frank and agreeable. His dress was very rich and cared for, and he wore round his neck a little chain of gold that had a jewel hanging from it. I cannot remember what was the motto round the jewel; but on his finger he wore a diamond ring. As I have told the manner of his death and other things about him, this is all that I set

down." Not much, but yet enough for us to see what kind of man he who was called the Sun was, as he sat upon his horse, or leaped across the broken bridge during the memorable siege.

Having described Pedro de Alvarado, Diaz goes on to touch in portraits of most of all the memorable Conquerors, beginning with Cortés.

"After having received the Sacraments, our Lord Jesus Christ was pleased to summon him from this troublous world. So he died on the second of December 1547 . . . he was buried in the Chapel of the Dukes of Medina-Sidonia, and afterwards his bones were brought to New Spain.[1] . . . In the year in which we came with him from Cuba to New Spain, which was in 1519, he used to say in conversation with us that he was thirty-four years of age, so that with the twenty-eight that passed until his death, he was just sixty-two. . . . The motto and the quarterings that he bore in his arms were fitting for a brave man, and suitable to his heroic deeds. As they were written all in Latin, and I know none of it, I do not set them down; but his arms had seven heads of kings in them, united by a chain. These heads, I think, were those of Montezuma and Lord of Mexico, Guatemozin his nephew, Lord of Tezcuco, that of the Lord of Tacuba and of the Lord of Cuyoacán, and of another great chief, Tulapa, Lord of Mataleingo.[2] . . . I will go on and speak about the appearance and condition of Cortés. He

[1] Bernal Diaz seldom or never applies the word Mexico to the whole country, but usually refers to it as New Spain.

[2] These lords or chiefs remind one of the kings of Canaan in the Old Testament, and of Og, King of Bashan, and his bold compeers.

was of good stature and large body, well proportioned and muscular. The colour of his face was rather ashen, and his general aspect not very cheerful. If his face had been longer it would have become him better.[1] Sometimes his look was pleasant, and at others grave. His beard was black and grew a little sparsely on his chin. His hair, which in those days he wore long, was of the same colour as his beard. His chest was deep, his shoulders broad, and he was thin and had but little belly. His legs were well set on, but bowed a little. He was a good horseman, skilful at all weapons on horseback and on foot, and above all had a good heart and courage, which matter more than all the rest. I heard that in his youth in Hispaniola he was much given to women, and that he was engaged in several duels with brave and skilful men on that account, and always came off with the victory. He had a sword-cut on his lower lip which you could see by looking closely at it, but it was covered by his beard. This scar he got in one of these adventures. In everything—his presence, walk, his conversation, and his mode of speech, in eating and his dress[2]—he showed he was a person of high rank. His clothes were always of the fashion and the period in which he lived, though he did not dress in rich silks, brocades, or satins, but plainly, and always all his things were very clean. Neither did he care for great gold chains, but wore a little chain about his neck of exquisite workmanship. From it

[1] In any case, one is glad to know he had not the long face of a male mule, "Una cara de macho mula," as the Spanish saying has it.

[2] In fact, the Spanish saying, "Por facha, traje y equipaje, se conoce el personage," applied to him, and I wonder Diaz does not quote it, as he loved proverbs and sayings.

there hung a jewel with the image of Our Lady, the Blessed Virgin Mary, with her precious Son in her arms. The motto round it was in Latin—that is to say, upon the side on which appeared Our Lady. Upon the other side was our Lord St. John the Baptist, with another motto. He wore a handsome diamond ring upon his finger, and in his cap (for in those days caps were in fashion) he wore a medal with a figure on it that I cannot recall. After that time, as he grew older, he used to wear a plain cloth cap without a medal. He was served richly, like a great lord, by two grooms of the chamber, a controller of his household, and many pages, and all the service of his house was splendid, with many ewers of silver and of gold.

"At midday he ate moderately, and drank a cup of wine, but mixed with water. At supper he took little and ate sparingly. He never cared the least for delicacies or for costly dishes, but only when he was obliged for state to make a show.

"He was most affable with all his captains and his comrades, especially with all of us who had come from Cuba in his train.

"He was a Latinist and I heard tell a Bachelor of Law, and when he talked with lawyers or with Latinists he answered what they said in Latin with the best of them.

"Also he was a little of a poet,[1] and made songs in metre and in prose. When he discussed or argued, he spoke quietly, and with good choice of words. He prayed each evening, using a book of Hours, and then heard Mass with great devotion. He held Our Lady

[1] *Era algo poeta.*

the Blessed Mary as his chief advocate—as indeed every faithful Christian should. Also he adored our Lord St. Peter, and our Lord St. James, together with our Lord St. John the Baptist, and was an almsgiver.

"When he swore, all that he said was, 'By my conscience,' and when by any chance he was angry with any soldier of our friends, he said, 'Oh, bad luck to you.' When he was very much enraged, a vein swelled in his throat and on his forehead also, and now and then, if he was very much stirred up, he spat upon the ground.[1] He never used bad words or insulting language either to his captains or his soldiers. In all things he was patient; and when the soldiers, which happened now and then, answered him discourteously, the most he said was, 'Silence! Go with God, and in the future take more care in what you say, or it will be the worse for you.'

"In all things touching war he was most obstinate, and never listened to our counsels or anything we said.[2] . . . I do not care to tell all his adventures, for it takes up too much time . . . so I return to speak about himself, and tell you that he was very fond of cards and dice, and when he played at them, he always played fairly, repeating now and then certain old saws, such as are loved by players at such games. In all the conquests that we made, he was most careful, and many a night he never slept, walking from post to post to see the sentinels, and if they kept good watch. Sometimes he used to go into the soldiers' quarters, and if he

[1] A sign of rage with Spaniards and Italians.

[2] This obstinacy, Diaz says, caused him on several occasions to risk defeat and cost him many lives.

found them sleeping without their shoes, or with their armour laid aside, he would reprove them, saying that a bad sheep felt its own wool too heavy for it, and other slighting words. . . . When we first came to the New Spain, he was thin and lean in his condition, but when we came back from Honduras he grew stouter and began to dye his beard. . . . In California and in the expedition to Honduras he had evil fortune, and in many other things after New Spain was won . . . it may be to prepare his soul for heaven; for so I judge it, as he was a good knight and a great devotee of the Blessed Virgin and of all the other Saints. I pray the Lord to pardon all his sins, and pardon mine too, and give me a good ending, which after all is more important than all the conquests and the victories that we had in the New Spain."

Few portraits more complete and accurate can have been penned by any man than this which the old soldier wrote of the great captain whom he followed in his youth.

Years had not dimmed his recollection; nor had they made him heighten any of the colours, deepen the shadows, or distort the values; nor had the flight of time impaired his judgment, for he does not forget to censure when he thinks that censure is deserved, as in the passage when he says Cortés was obstinate, and refused good advice. In such descriptions, words have one great advantage over colours and design, for to draw such a portrait, either in colour or design, great skill is necessary; and although Diaz proved himself a master of his craft, he clearly had no training in it, and all he says he puts before us just as it struck him at the

time and remained stamped upon his brain. Thus the above portrait of Cortés is in some ways more realistic than any painting of him possibly could be. It leaves, of course, less to the imagination; but presents the man, just as he spoke and walked. Curiously enough, when he had finished it, in the next chapter he pens the harshest of his censures on Cortés, blaming him for not mentioning the names of any of his captains or his soldiers in his letters to the Emperor. Diaz forgets, of course, that Cortés most probably did not foresee how celebrated he was destined to become, and probably considered all his letters as of the nature of reports. Although Cortés forgot to name the officers and men, fifty years after Diaz remembered all of the outstanding officers and men-at-arms. In his vast gallery of portraits, he paints dozens of these in a few touches, so that those who read Diaz could not fail to recognise many of the humblest soldiers, if they should happen to rise again with the same bodies, in another world.

"Captain Luis Marin was a man of good stature, very strongly made. His beard was fair, his face an oval, and he smiled frequently. He was a little marked with smallpox. This captain was a good horseman and a pleasant speaker. As he came from San Lucar, he lisped a little, after the Seville way.[1]

"There was another man that came with us, whom we called Beberreo, for he was a great drinker, and one called el Galleguillo, a very little man—the Indians ate him. Another first-rate soldier was Juan Escalante,

[1] In the provinces of Seville and Cadiz the people often have a strong lisp in their speech, which makes them difficult to understand by foreigners.

always well dressed, and a good rider; he turned Franciscan friar. This Escalante broke his vows and came back to the world to triumph,[1] and then after a month went back again to his convent, and became a first-rate monk."

The plan is not a bad one, and perhaps monks would be more contented if now and then they returned back into the world for a brief triumph, after the fashion of this Escalante, who became so good a friar.

"Pedro de Guzman was very handsome, and married Doña Francisca de Voltierra, a Valencian lady. He and his wife, together with a negro and some horses that they had, died frozen, and may God have pardoned their misdeeds. Santos Hernandez came from Soria, and though an old man, was so good a rider that we all called him the good old horseman. He also was a scout, and died naturally at last."[2]

Of few of them does Diaz write that they died naturally, but far more frequently he adds after a portrait of a man, "was eaten by the Indians," or "died in battle," which kind of death no doubt seemed far more natural to him than a mere parting from the world in the dull, ordinary way. No one escaped the observation of the old Conquistador, for we learn that amongst the soldiers there were four men called Solis. "One was an old man, and died fighting valiantly when Mexico was won. The second, as he was full of fun, we called Casquete. The third we called Solis behind the door, for he was always sitting behind the door of his house to spy out what was passing in the street. The fourth always called himself Solis of the battles, but we," Diaz

[1] *Se volvió a triunfar.* [2] *Murio de su muerte.*

remarks, "called him Solis of the silk doublet, for he was very fond of silk."

How many a valiant captain has a different name in his own estimation, from that by which his friends refer to him behind his back.

With his old adversary, Captain Pedro de Ircio, Diaz is not merciful, for he remembers all his faults. "Pedro de Ircio was of a tricky nature, and middling height. He waddled as he walked, and was a babbler, and also talked about his exploits in Castile. What we saw of him and what we knew of him was not worth talking of, so we called him another Agrages without works."

It did not do to offend Diaz, for those who did so were certain of unpleasant mention in his book. One Porras had very yellow hair, and was a great singer, and Ortiz played the guitar well and gave dancing lessons. Bartholomew Garcia had the best horse of those who came from Cuba with the fleet.

These gentlemen may be thankful to have survived either by their accomplishments, as dancing and playing the guitar, or their gifts of nature, as the yellow hair Diaz refers to, or by the accident of having a good horse. Some only have a niche in the temple Diaz raised by having suffered from *el mal de bubas*, which I shall leave without translating, merely remarking that it was a disease that specially seems to have attacked the sons of Mars, both at the Conquest and at other times of the world's history. So he goes on for many pages, touching off the salient characteristics of his old friends and comrades just as if they were all of them alive and he had seen them yesterday. Their accents and peculiarities

of body or of mind, their names, the towns they came from, and the nicknames that they bore—nothing escaped him, after so many years.

Critics of those days—for even in the town of Guatemala in the year of grace 1668 specimens of that irritable genus had already made their appearance—were inclined to question the gifts of memory that Diaz had, just as they might have been annoyed by his wit, humour, pathos, or any of the gifts they did not share with him. As they themselves probably could not recognise their own horses if they saw them feeding on the plain unless they had a label on their backs, they doubted if it were possible that Diaz could remember all his comrades after so many years.

His answer was: "It is not much that I remember all their names, for though we were in all five hundred and fifty comrades, we lived like brothers, and always talked together, in the wars, on watch, and in the battles and all the hazards of our lives. We talked of those who had been slain and about those who had been carried off and sacrificed. . . . I further say that I remember all of them so well that I could paint or sculpture all their faces if I knew how to draw . . . even their way of walking and each detail of their faces and their forms . . . and how each one of them went into battle, and the courage that he showed . . . and I thank God and also His Blessed Lady Mother that I escaped from being sacrificed to idols, and for having spared me to preserve their memory."

There is something touching in his sincerity and in the loyalty he shows to the old friends and comrades of his youth. Without him, the names of all these humble

Conquerors would have been irretrievably lost. Some day, no doubt, in those far-distant times when every man shall reap the fruit of his own labour and enjoy the meed of honour that his deeds have gained him, some government in Mexico will raise a column to their memory, with their names written on its base, and with a statue of the man who rescued them from the oblivion into which they fell. It might stand opposite the Cathedral, which itself is built upon the site of the great temple, on whose steps so many of the Conquerors had been led out and sacrificed to the sad, hollow booming of the great drum which impressed Diaz with such horror when he heard its melancholy sound. He himself seemed to think something was necessary, for he breaks out in an apostrophe to Fame.

"I ask the illustrious Lady, Fame, What has she done for us, the Conquerors, and for the dead? Where are their sepulchres? What hatchments are there on their tombs? To this it can be answered shortly, oh excellent and illustrious Fame, so much desired and praised amongst the virtuous: I do not wish to see thee, nor to hear thy name. . . . I tell thee, Lady, that of all the soldiers who came to the New Spain from Cuba with Cortés, up to this year of grace 1588 in which I write, but five are left. Their sepulchres, I say, are, for the most part, in the bellies of the Indians. Those are their sepulchres and their hatchments, but their names should be written down in golden letters, for they came here to serve God and His Majesty the King, to spread the light in darkness . . . and also to get riches, a thing which commonly all mankind pursues." The last

sentence takes the words out of his critics' mouths, and out of all the mouths of all the critics of the Conquistadores who left Cuba with Cortés. They came, just as the English went to India, and all the world has gone to Africa, impelled by different motives. All, no doubt, thought that they were serving God, for all men make their god in their own image. If it were not so, there would be no need to make a god, for everyone would be as God himself. All thought they served their various kings; for to do evil so that good may come from it, is and has been and probably will ever be, the salve that men lay on their souls when they are raw.

The Conquerors and ourselves both thought and think that they and we went out a-conquering to spread the light in the dark places of the earth; for each man only sees the light that he brings with him, just as in old-fashioned Spanish inns the host always declared that there was everything, and then, on being pressed, added, "Of what Your Grace has in his saddle-bags." Only the simple-minded Castilian man-at-arms had the honesty to put down in moulded letters the last incentive of all conquerors. He sets it down so simply that we see at once that he was right; and as he states the case, he takes some of the sting away, for it is only human nature after all to try and benefit ourselves; and to get riches is a thing "that all men commonly go out to seek."[1]

In 1550 Diaz made his last journey home. The Court at that time was in Valladolid, so that he must have passed and very likely visited his native town.[2]

[1] *Y tambien por haber riquezas, que comunmente todos los hombres venimos á buscar.*

[2] Medina del Campo.

He does not tell us if he did or not, for his heart was in Mexico, and, as the Spanish proverb says, "Where the heart is, there also lives the speech." By this time, he says he was the oldest Conqueror left alive in all New Spain. As such, he was summoned to attend the Court in Spain, for once again the much-vexed question of the repartition of the Indians was in debate. Diaz was of the party that proposed the Indians should be allotted in perpetuity to various families, alleging that thus it would become the interest of their owners to treat them properly.

The great Las Casas and a few friars opposed the scheme, saying with reason that it was slavery under another name. They fought so well that the affair was left without decision, and Diaz saw his last chance of "being recompensed with Indians" vanish into thin air. His vote on this occasion was not one of the actions of his life that most redounds to his good name; but still, when all is said and done, he was a simple soldier, without much education and accustomed to believe that he and all the Conquerors had deserved well of the Emperor, who, as he says, conquered New Spain without having put out any of his treasure in our aid, although "he was so good a Christian."[1]

When Diaz had finished writing his veracious history, he tells us that two licentiates asked him to let them see it, as they wished to compare it with other chronicles. "I lent it to them, because a simple and unlettered man such as myself always learns something from the wise. At the same time, I told them that they must neither alter nor amend, for all I write is true."

[1] *Como nuestro Cesar fue tan Christiano.*

Even in those days it appears that the sub-editor was about, ready to alter and amend, just as it seemed good to his sweet will. The licentiates praised the book, saying that it was written in the good, terse speech of Old Castile, and that beside good style it contained much good information, and it appeared that all it had in it was true.

One criticism they did make, and that Diaz with his usual ingenuity does not conceal. They said he boasted too much of his own prowess in the battle he described.

The criticism is not a fair one, for Diaz set out to write his book with the fixed purpose of rescuing the actions of himself and other of the common soldiers who had shared his dangers from the oblivion into which they had been flung by historians such as Illescas and Fray Francisco Gómara, who ascribed all the merit to Cortés. "I answered them that in this world there are things about which men praise their neighbours and do not talk about themselves, but he who was not present at a fight, what can he know about it? Did they expect the birds to talk about the battles that we fought, as they flew over us? Or shall the clouds discuss of what they saw up in the firmament. . . . If you had found me, Gentlemen Licentiates, taking away the honour or renown of any of the valiant captains or brave soldiers whom I have written of, then you had reason to complain."

The passage does him honour, and anyone who reads his book cannot but testify that in this respect, at least, no blame attaches to him.

The last days of the stout old soldier were spent in Guatemala, where he was a magistrate.

He himself tells us that in extreme old age his health was not impaired, and speaks of journeys that he made on horseback to visit his estate.

It seems uncertain when he died; but as his old companions all were dead, he must have felt a little lonely in a world in which the name of his old general no longer filled men's mouths, and where the fame of the great Conquest was slowly growing dim.

All that we know of him is to be found in his own book. Had he not written it, literature would have been the poorer, and of the outward semblances of Alvarado and Cortés, of Montezuma and of Sandoval, little enough would have been known, for Fray Francisco Gómara wrote when all of them were dead.

As it is, all the chief actors in the siege of the great Tenochtitlan are quite familiar to us.

Diaz lives as it were embalmed in the idiomatic Old Castilian that he brought with him from Spain when he set out a youth, and still remembered in his old age, when he had laid down the sword for ever and taken up the pen.

*Printed by* Morrison & Gibb Limited, *Edinburgh*

# A True Hapsburg

FRANCIS JOSEPH . . . Emperor of Austria, King of Hungary . . . By Eugene Bagger . . . *New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons* . . . $5.

Reviewed by
E. L. ADAM

# Bernal Diaz

To the Editor of BOOKS:

Sir—The review by Dr. Priestley in today's book supplement of the reprint of the Keatinge translation of the "Conquest of Mexico," by Bernal Diaz is timely. This translation is of little value to either the general reader or the student, for the reasons pointed out by Priestley.

The assertion of the editor, Mr. Smith, that the Diaz account and the letters of Cortes are the only sources of original eyewitnesses of the conquest which we possess is amazing for one who undertakes to edit a work of this character.

Dr. Priestley calls attention to the work of the Anonymous Conqueror, which I translated and published some years ago, and refers to the work of Andres de Tapia, which awaits an English version. In this connection I may say that this work has been translated and will be issued by the Cortes Society during the late spring, together with another account of an eyewitness not mentioned by Priestley, namely, that of Francisco de Aguilar. Thus we have five independent accounts of events connected with the conquest of Mexico written by eyewitnesses. Of these, naturally, those of Cortes and Bernal Diaz are the fullest and of the highest importance, and a new edition of the latter should have been made from the ungarbled original manuscript source, made available by Maudslay's masterly translation of the Garcia edition of the same, which was issued some years ago by the Hakluyt Society. MARSHALL H. SAVILLE.

ork Times
Review
Section 4
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York Times Company.)

# HIS NEW YORK

## *Discreet Piece of Autobiography*

housands by his voice over the radio. The manner of writing, and the contents f "Up to Now" reveal the true Smith; ot an echo of the man when he was heriff of New York. Its style is restrained nd dignified, with only an occasional necdote where the story makes the point nder discussion more clear. During the ight years of his service as Governor, Al mith lost much of the joviality of his ssembly days. He was often austere, even

tion on the liquor question seem to be the first to disagree publicly with that part of the Constitution which says: "No religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States."

It is amazing in this day and age that such countless thousands of people are so stupid as to believe the absolutely false and senseless propaganda that was whispered around during the last campaign. * * * To my way of thinking neither the tariff nor, for that matter, the farm problem were important factors in the determination of the election. In its broad aspect the campaign appeared to me to be one of Smith or anti-Smith. Very little was said about Mr. Hoover. But that is no new thing in American politics. There have been as many elections determined negatively as there have been affirmatively. A great many people predicate their vote on something they are against rather than something that they are for. The campaign proved that the one thing which has not yet been overcome in the conduct of campaigns is the ability of organized groups to mislead large masses of the electorate by false propaganda.

Many will find greatest enjoyment in those sections of "Up to Now" which deal with New Yo